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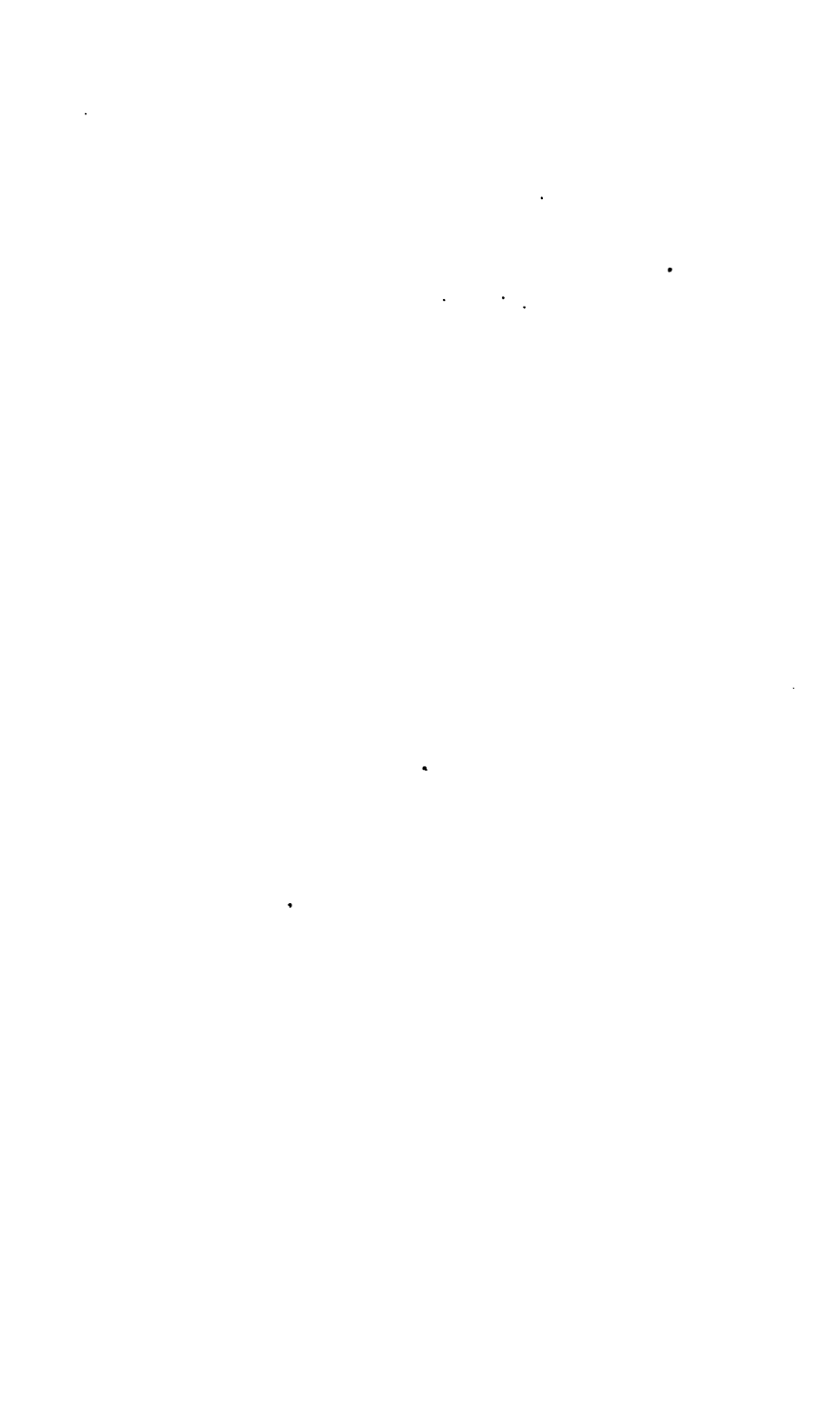




THE POWER OF THE TONGUE:

OR,

CHAPTERS FOR TALKERS.



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## CHAPTERS FOR TALKERS.

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BY BENJAMIN SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "VICE-ROYALTY," "CLIMBING," ETC.

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"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

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## PREFACE.

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It sometimes happens that a mine, rich in ore, but imperfectly explored, has to be forsaken. To leave the place where the labourer is fully convinced there are large stores of wealth, which superior skill and strength might have secured, is humiliating and painful. The miner, though he may have brought to the surface a little precious ore, feels disappointed as he observes how greatly his performance has fallen short of his desires and hopes.

Regret of a similar kind is experienced by the writer of the following chapters, as he lays down his pen. He doubted not, when he commenced his task, that truth of incalculable importance was here to be obtained. At the entrance of this mine, in ancient and indelible characters, and written by a Hand unerring because Divine, was many a legend such as the one selected to adorn the title-page of this volume: "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue.*" We are thus assured, on the highest possible authority, that the subject is closely connected with our real and endless blessedness. General experience and observation furnish abundant illustration of this lesson. There was no room for doubt. When, however, the attempt was made to grasp the priceless

truth, and so to exhibit it, in its multiplied aspects and relations, that its worth should be clearly perceived, and its power suitably felt, the task was not found to be an easy one. But comparative failure in working the mine has occasioned no change in the labourer's opinion as to its richness, except an augmented conviction thereof. He has discerned gleams of precious things which he could not fully reach. Inaptitude has limited his success; weariness has caused his tools to be laid aside; other tasks demand his earnest care. But he ventures to call the attention of others to the unerring declarations concerning the hidden treasure.

That a volume on this important subject was needed, the writer believed; or these pages would not have been written. It is not unlikely that the thoughtful reader may, when laying down the book, say within himself, "A volume on this subject is *still* needed." But, should such be the case, the present effort may not have been altogether in vain. An unskilled labourer may carry the stones which by abler men shall be formed into an admirable edifice. Those who preside over the operations of the loom, and who thereby produce a thousand forms of beauty, are indebted for the raw material to those who have toiled in fields far away. Even a bird alighting on the mast, or a leaf floating on the wave, or tiny shells clinging to the lead, may have indicated to the intelligent though bewildered and discouraged voyager that the country for which he was searching was nigh. Or, to return to an illustration already employed, men who possess neither sufficient knowledge, nor vigour, nor capital, nor leisure, fully to work a mine, may still be able to call the attention of others to indications that the

soil is rich in mineral products, or otherwise worthy of careful examination. From the secret treasure-chambers of our globe wealth, various in kind and vast in amount, is annually obtained. Tens of thousands are labouring beneath the surface of our island-home, and tens of thousands beneath the surface of other lands. But though now much learning, and immense toil, and complicated machinery, and resources of various kinds are employed in the acquisition of this mineral wealth, men devoid of these have formerly done something toward this result. The rude guesses, and feeble attempts, and puny achievements of the uninstructed prepared the way for those who will manifest the triumphant power of well-directed labour. Those who never secured more than that which lay near the surface, or was apparent in the side of some cliff, or had been laid bare by volcanic shock, or had been brought down by mountain-torrent, indicated what might be gained by those who were observant, and mighty, and patient.

Beyond doubt, there are, in the subject here suggested, lessons of immense worth. Look at that infallible direction chiselled in the living and indestructible rock, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Besides that are others innumerable, of equal authority, and confirmatory and explanatory of this one. Here are treasures of truth. If I have succeeded in laying bare the soil, penetrating a little way beneath the surface, and presenting to you that which is precious, though neither abundant nor refined, and exposing veins which will amply repay your diligent exploration, I have not laboured in vain. Do not stay to criticize the unskilfulness or feebleness manifested in my

attempt. Follow it up for your own benefit. Explore these productive veins with ardour, and diligence, and perseverance. Test what has been laid down in this hand-book of the mine. Supply the deficiencies you discover therein. But be sure that such wealth be not heedlessly laid aside, nor merely stored up in the chambers of your memory, nor employed to awaken the admiration of beholders. Having obtained it, let it be used by you as current coin. You will find it pleasant and serviceable in daily intercourse with those around you. Words of truth are as the authorized coin of the realm, issued from the royal mint of heaven, and bearing the superscription of the Great King. It is the will of our Divine and Gracious Sovereign that this coin, and no other, shall be employed by His liege subjects. While in search of this wealth, lay down the hand-book, to think and pray, as often as you please. But be diligent. So, whether you choose, or not, to imitate my temerity in making known to others the result of your meditations, you will be personally enriched.

# CONTENTS.

---

PREFACE . . . . .	PAGE v
-------------------	--------

## INTRODUCTION.

Practical Science of universal Importance—A mighty Power— Constant Influence—Daily Employment—Permanent Results— Attainable Control—Solemn Accountability—Constant Progress —Words heard—Vigilant Care—Divinely employed.	PAGES 1—24
--	------------

## CHAPTER I.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMAN VOICE.

1. The Human Voice can express our Meaning with great Distinctness—2. The Human Voice possesses largely the Power of Persuasion—3. The Human Voice is a Gift which has been entrusted to most of us—4. The Human Voice is a Power which, with few Exceptions, is felt by all—5. The Human Voice exerts an Influence during every Period of Life—6. The Human Voice makes its Power to be felt each Day of our Lives— 7. The Human Voice largely modifies the Character of the Speaker—8. The Human Voice produces Results which are endless in Duration . . . . .	PAGES 25—52
--	-------------

## CHAPTER II.

### THE AUTHORIZED STANDARD OF SPEECH.

1. Truthfulness—2. Reverence—3. Love—4. Wisdom—5. Purity— 6. Caution—7. Courtesy—8. Courage—9. Thankfulness— 10. Spirituality . . . . .	PAGES 53—82
---	-------------

## CHAPTER III.

## THE PERFECT MODEL OF SPEECH.

1. The Lord Jesus acquiring Divine Knowledge—2. The Lord Jesus sorely tempted—3. The Lord Jesus imparting Instruction—4. The Lord Jesus undergoing unparalleled Suffering—5. The Lord Jesus surrounded by the Ungodly—6. The Lord Jesus supplying a complete Model for our Converse . PAGES 83—109

## CHAPTER IV.

## CRIMES PERPETRATED BY WICKED TALKERS.

1. Wicked Men endeavour, by means of their Tongues, to purloin their Neighbours' Property—2. Wicked Men will, for Gain, indorse the Falsehoods invented by others—3. Wicked Men will deny the Truth rather than endure Suffering—4. Wicked Men will attempt to deceive in order to gain Applause—5. Wicked Men, by their Tongues, injure the Character of their Neighbours—6. Wicked Men, by their Words, occasion and promote Contention—7. Wicked Men endeavour to lead others into Sin—8. Wicked Men dare to defy Almighty God . PAGES 110—134

## CHAPTER V.

## BLUNDERS COMMITTED BY CARELESS TALKERS.

1. We may blunder in consequence of unsuspected Evil still remaining within our Hearts—2. We may blunder in consequence of the Force of Habit—3. We may blunder in consequence of yielding to others—4. We may blunder in consequence of a Desire for Victory—5. We may blunder in consequence of wishing to produce a Sensation—6. We may blunder in consequence of being too fond of talking—7. We may blunder in consequence of our own previous Inattention—8. We may blunder in consequence of giving Credence to incorrect Statements—9. We may blunder in consequence of Reaction from the Unreasonableness of others—10. We may blunder in consequence of a supposed Possession of Wit—11. We may blunder in consequence of misdirected Conscientiousness—12. We may blunder in consequence of the Suddenness of Temptation . . . . . PAGES 135—158

## CHAPTER VI.

## BLESSINGS CONFERRED BY WISE TALKERS.

1. By speaking wisely we may benefit the Youthful—2. By speaking wisely we may benefit the Sinful—3. By speaking wisely we may benefit the Penitent—4. By speaking wisely we may benefit the Tempted—5. By speaking wisely we may benefit the Sorrowful—6. By speaking wisely we may benefit the Dying.

PAGES 159—182

## CHAPTER VII.

## WORDS SPOKEN BY THOSE AROUND US.

1. Never willingly admit a known Enemy—2. Guard against the Practices of Enemies who enter without your Consent—3. Carefully scrutinize the Credentials of those who seek to become Residents—4. Greatly prize those who are manifested to be true Friends . . . . .

PAGES 183—204

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE CORRECT ESTIMATE OF OUR OWN WORDS.

1. We must obtain a thorough Acquaintance with the Teachings of holy Scripture—2. Frequently refer to the authorized Standard—3. Let us seek Counsel at the Mercy-seat—4. The Advice of judicious Friends must be prized—5. We may profit by the Censures of those who are prejudiced against us—6. By Defects perceived in others, let us be admonished concerning ourselves.

PAGES 205—224

## CHAPTER IX.

## ELEMENTS OF POWER IN SPEAKING.

1. Truth is an Element of Power—2. The Gospel is an Element of Power—3. Knowledge of Divine Things is an Element of Power—4. Earnestness is an Element of Power—5. Simplicity of Purpose is an Element of Power—6. Perspicuity of Style is an Element of Power—7. Love is an Element of Power—8. Perseverance is an Element of Power . . . . .

PAGES 225—248



## CHAPTER X.

## THE VOICE A WITNESS FOR ITS MAKER.

1. Mark the Adaptation of the Instrument for the desired End—
2. Observe the countless Number of Ideas which may be conveyed by this one Instrument—3. Consider the Precision with which our Ideas may be expressed—4. The Facility with which the Instrument is used—5. The diminutive Size of the Instrument—6. Our Ability to convey Ideas to Persons at a Distance—7. The Capability of regulating the Forces of Sound—8. The Pleasure attendant on friendly Converse—9. The Multiplicity of Operations performed—10. Our inexplicable Control over the Voice—11. The Provision for Self-reparation—12. The Adaptation of the Voice to the Ear . . . . PAGES 249—272

## CHAPTER XI.

## CONTROL OVER THE TONGUE ATTAINED.

1. The Heart must be rectified—2. Unhesitating Submission to the Teachings of holy Scripture—3. Be on your Guard so as to arrest the first wrong Word—4. Promptitude in the Utterance of the right Word is desirable—5. The Amount of our talking must be restrained within due Limits—6. Self-Education must be our daily Task—7. Divine Aid must be constantly obtained—8. We must learn from the Failures of the Past . . . PAGES 273—295

## CHAPTER XII.

## INCENTIVES TO THE RIGHT USE OF OUR LIPS.

1. The Gift of Speech manifests the Goodness of God—2. We are responsible for the Use of our Lips—3. All our Words are known to Almighty God—4. The Lord Jesus died that our Voices might be for ever employed in the happy Service of God—5. Almighty God waits to impart all needful Aid—6. There is great Delight in thus doing Good—7. Whatever Painfulness may be in our Task will soon be over—8. The Voice which is employed aright on Earth will be heard in Heaven . . . . PAGES 296—322

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE government of the tongue is a practical science with which every individual ought to be acquainted. The circle of the sciences has of late become so extended, that no person, however gifted, and whatever his leisure and advantages, can master the whole. A selection must be made by every student, and that selection must, in the case of most, be exceedingly restricted. Concerning many subjects, the merest elements must suffice. The nation would not be well supplied with laws, medicine, or divinity, with coats, houses, or food, if each member of the commonwealth undertook to comprehend, in all its amplitude, what is comprised in the term "science." But we are certainly disposed to think that the practical science considered in this volume ought to be mastered by all. This may, perhaps, appear more fully, as the chapters are read; but at the very threshold we commend the subject to earnest and prayerful attention. We speak here of an agency which will certainly be employed in some manner; and which cannot, without great injury, be employed selfishly, heedlessly, or ignorantly.

He who daily uses a lancet ought to know how a lancet should be used. But the tongue has inflicted injuries more numerous and disastrous than were ever occasioned by the lancet when in the hands of the most ignorant, clumsy, and self-opinionated of pretenders; and the tongue has also done more good than was ever effected by the lancet as employed by the most learned, skilful, and inquiring among the noble-minded brotherhood of surgeons. The tongue, so potent for good or evil, is daily employed by each one of us. Few are the waking hours which we allow to pass away without talking. We, therefore, certainly ought to learn how to employ our tongues.

The government of the tongue demands the care of all, because of its influence upon our welfare and that of others. The science of language, sometimes spoken of as "comparative philology," is a subject of deep interest, but can be carefully and advantageously studied by few. The number of students is, doubtless, greater than at the commencement of this century; and will, most likely, increase. Some who possess the needful gifts, and are placed in favourable circumstances, and have tastes of this order, will be forthcoming to extend the researches commenced by such men as Grimm, Max-Müller, and other scholars of renown. From that field of intellectual toil, rich harvests will be reaped. Practical men, who have looked on the quiet and absorbed students with mingled pity and disdain, and have been ready to stigmatize them as idlers, will begin to perceive that

the results of that noiseless and patient toil may be profitably employed amid the bustle of manufacturing and commercial enterprise. The higher welfare of our race will also be hereby promoted. Comparative philology stands among the younger of the noble sisterhood of sciences; yet has she already laid some token of her allegiance before the Eternal Throne. There has been, and for a time may be, somewhat of the hasty vaunting and premature prediction in which sceptics are apt to indulge. But the science of language will one day bear a glorious tribute to confirm and illustrate that Divine word which shall never pass away. Speech, as an instrument of the human mind, will become more powerful than it has ever been. For a time it may be employed in the support of error, as well as of truth; yet this weapon will have much to do with the final and complete prevalence of truth.

But, however important comparative philology may be, we cannot commend it as an acquisition for all. The key, which we are told by scholars has been furnished by Sanskrit, that ancient and long-guarded language of India, must not be so much as handled or gazed upon by the busy among us. Most of us will never acquire more than the merest elements of the science, as these are simplified for our benefit; and many will never have the opportunity of proceeding even so far. We must leave to others the task of laborious investigation, curious research, and ingenious theorizing concerning the weapon which we all constantly wield. Our duty is to employ it, as

it has been committed to us, for God and the right. It may be proper for some to ascertain all that can be known of warlike weapons. Such, in the quiet of a military academy, may have leisure to inquire with what kind of armour, offensive and protective, Nimrod, that mighty hunter of men, was arrayed; how old Troy was assailed and defended; how Carthage directed the fiery tide of war to the very walls of Rome, yet was at length destroyed; and so trace the increasing destructiveness of those deadly instruments by which, age after age, men have sought to slay their opponents, until the question arises concerning the comparative merits of granite and iron, land-defences and floating batteries. But there is no time for such researches during actual conflict. The question for each combatant, face to face with the foe, is, "How can I best employ such weapons as I have?" When the empire of the sea was disputed, at the opening of this century, our naval chieftain perplexed not his mind concerning curious questions appertaining to the past or the future. Yonder, this day, is an armament which, if triumphant, will greatly assist in the subjugation of Europe to a military despotism. That armament must not be triumphant. How can it be most effectually and speedily destroyed? Nelson had no iron ships, no screw-steamers, no invulnerable rams; but with such vessels as he had, and the hearts of English oak prepared to carry out his resolves, he swept the allied foes of Britain from the seas. We must leave comparative philology, though it may establish its claim

to be regarded as "the science of language," to a few men of gigantic mind and abundant leisure. The most we can do in that department is to sit now and then at their feet, and learn a few of their lessons. But we must not so pass by that kindred practical science,—the government of the tongue. The weapon which has been placed in our hands must be employed for the welfare of our race, and the glory of our Lord. The honoured chieftains in the world of letters may know much more than we do concerning the weapons employed, and may themselves possess a brighter and keener blade ; but we must so use the one which has been entrusted to us, as to secure the approval of our kingly Leader. Many considerations commend to our careful regard this practical science,—the government of the tongue.

*The power exerted by the human voice is incalculable.*—Speech is an instrument of the mind, possessing amazing capabilities. During many ages, steam was not regarded as an agent of any great importance. The savage sometimes watched it as it slowly ascended toward the topmost boughs of the trees near to which he had kindled his fire and placed his caldron. No curiosity was awakened within his untutored mind, as he lazily observed it settle upon the branches and leaves of the sheltering trees. The educated and inquiring of modern times asked no questions as it escaped from kettle or urn, while they partook of an infusion of the pleasant Eastern herb. No achievement of steam was to be found among the records or the traditions of the people, more worthy than the

raising of the lid of caldron or kettle ; and it had not often occasioned mischief beyond scalding the hand of some careless squaw or cook, or causing pain to some juvenile philosopher whose practical turn of mind led him to examine into the properties and capabilities of steam for himself, instead of duly inquiring thereof from his authorized instructors. So long as its power was undiscerned, steam was not deemed worthy the attention of adult and educated mind. If employed as an illustration by the orators of those days, we may suppose that it would be as representing that which is worthless, as we now speak of those magnificent purposes and protestations which end *in smoke*. But in this latter half of the nineteenth century, steam is not classed with smoke. Men of keen observation, and accustomed to patient inquiry, began to think that this heated vapour might be employed as an agent. James Watt, when but a child, found a subject of serious study in the tea-kettle, which had penetrated so far as to his Scottish home. When a man, he discovered and made known the marvellous capabilities of the hitherto unyoked giant. Since then, others, by investigation and experiment, have improved upon his teachings. Our children are informed what little James Watt was dreamily yet studiously surmising a little more than a century ago, that in steam a power resides beyond all calculation. Carriages and vessels are hereby propelled with a rapidity beyond the conception of those who produced the first locomotive. Mining operations can be carried on now to an extent utterly impracticable

when good King George the Third ascended the throne. The most arduous tasks are assigned to this agent, and are unfailingly and uncomplainingly performed. Steam, therefore, engages the attention of our ablest scientific men. So soon as its greatness was discerned, it was taken from the companionship of smoke. It was as though some Prince Royal had been discovered in association with scullions. He was at once led forth from his obscure abode to take his place in noble halls, and became one of the hopes of the nation. Power commanded respect and attention.—But, if we consider the entire recorded history of our race to the present day, we shall discover that the tongue has done more to advance or to retard the progress of human improvement, to provide or mar human comfort, and in other ways to bless or injure mankind, than steam. We are confident that our children's children will, in their days of enlarged experience and observation, have to assert the same.

*Our welfare is largely dependent on the proper employment of the tongue.*—The air by which we are at all times surrounded was long known to possess, when in motion, a considerable power. The craft which used to creep along the Tyrian coast, and in favourable weather venture to Cyprus, and even as far as Italy itself, depended for progress on the wind as well as on their oars. The armed vessels which, leaving the African coast, sought to maintain the supremacy of Carthage upon the inland sea, even when the Roman eagles flew over those waters,



spread their sails to the favouring breeze. The pirate-ships of the North-men who invaded this island, and the early navy of England, formed for its defence, a thousand years ago, by our great Alfred, had reason alike to desire and to dread the frequent winds. Air in motion was then known to be a power which could not be despised. But we are even now only beginning to learn how largely and constantly our comfort and health depend on the state of the atmosphere. The conviction is becoming stronger and more general, that the condition of the air is of vital importance to us every hour, to the mariner and the landsman, to the young and the old, to the rich and the poor. We are favourably or unfavourably affected by the atmosphere as it moves gently over our gardens on the bright summer day, as it enters our chambers during the warm night when the casement has been left partially open, and as it is vitiated when shut up in the ill-ventilated room. Everywhere, and at all times, it is a mighty agent for weal or woe. The glow of roseate health, or the flush of fatal fever, is hereby conveyed. Most of us are but occasionally and indirectly affected by any fresh discovery concerning steam. But we are all personally and continually affected by the air around us. This subject, at length, commands earnest attention. While it was a matter of merely philosophic investigation, men felt that they were at liberty to enter upon the study or not, according to inclination or opportunity. It was curious to

learn that we were walking at the bottom of a deep ocean of fluid, as fishes swim in an ocean of a denser fluid. We were startled to learn that the pressure on our body amounted to something like fourteen tons. It was interesting to know that the air, of which learned men in ancient times spoke as one of the four elements, was no element at all; but as truly a mixture, as our tea in which we have placed the amount of sugar and cream we prefer. We read, also, that the component parts were not always in the same proportion; as when at a friend's house the hospitable lady, through kindness, spoils our congou by putting therein one piece of sugar too much. There was much of this sort which was very interesting, but not of urgent and universal importance. Good men felt no painful solicitude whether or not the cottagers of remote villages, and the residents in back-alleys of towns, should be informed concerning these properties of the atmosphere. When, however, the question was seen to be one of health or disease, of life or death, generous hearts desired that all should know fully, and act wisely. This wish, which had long prevailed, was strengthened when there was mourning within the palaces of Portugal and Britain; and Europe was instructed, by the sorrow of royal hearts, that no individual was raised above this form of peril. The purity or vitiated state of the atmosphere was no longer a subject merely interesting to men of philosophic mind, or of learned leisure; it was brought closely home to the bosoms of all. Men generally became

more fully desirous to understand this branch of Social Science.—Let us never forget that the influence of words, as uttered around us, pervades our homes, and penetrates our hearts. It is not a power which, though mighty, is specially interesting to railway-directors, cotton-lords, and a few other magnates. It is a mighty power, indeed; but it is one by which we and ours are constantly affected. The influence of speech pervades us and our dwellings almost as constantly as the air we breathe, and comes into contact with interests of greater moment even than health. The life of the soul, in ourselves and in those we most dearly love, is hereby either promoted or injured.

*The voice is an instrument of the mind which is constantly employed.*—Its activity depends not on any remarkable coincidence of circumstances, nor on any state of the atmosphere, nor on any opportunity deemed specially favourable. That activity is well-nigh incessant. In this the tongue resembles the hand. Now, the power exerted by the human hand, day by day, could scarcely be over-estimated. Deprived of the hand, our race would be comparatively impotent. Notwithstanding the faculty of reason, we should be exceedingly helpless. The inventive powers of man would be constantly suggesting that which he was unable to execute. By means of the hand, directed by mind, man is able largely to control and mould external nature according to his own will. Transform the hand into a hoof or a claw, and man, notwithstanding his

intellect, would find it hard to maintain any degree of authority over the brutes, or even to obtain for himself the means of existence. Because men feel the importance of the hand in the important avocations of daily life, we find that it is trained with the utmost care. Years are employed in acquiring skill in the use of those tools which are to be employed. We should, indeed, have cause of regret, if the saying were applicable to us, as it was to some of Israel's ancient foes,—“None of the men of might have found their hands.” The youth of this and other lands expect that in years to come they will daily find advantage from expertness in using the hammer, axe, trowel, chisel, needle, awl, gun, bow, plough, quadrant, lancet, pen, or whatever instrument or tool appertains to their chosen avocation. They consequently submit with cheerfulness to the restraint and toil needful for training the hand to such expertness.—From similar considerations, we should endeavour to attain a suitable control over our tongue. Whether it be rightly directed or not, it will be daily employed. Doing good, or doing harm, the tongue will be active. The hand of the artisan, of the clerk, and of others, will sometimes have a holiday; and it ought, every week, to enjoy a Sabbath. But the tongue labours seven days every week. However loyal its possessor may be, the tongue stops not because of royal birth-days, coronation-days, or funeral-days; and, however devotional its owner may be, the tongue talks on fast-days and festivals, saints'-days and Sundays.

Ought not that which is so diligent to be trained to do well ?

*The results of speech are exceedingly enduring.*—It has been said, “A word may survive a pyramid.” Any combination of sounds, regarded as an acknowledged medium of expressing thought, may continue to exist longer than the most enduring works of the architect. No doubt there are, in our own very copious language, words substantially the same as those employed by the Saxon franklins and serfs when they were compelled to submit to the Norman invaders ; other words are there which differ little from those used by the haughty followers of William ; others can be found which have scarcely varied since they were employed in the orations of Cicero, the satires of Horace, or the great epic of Virgil. Others may be recognised as those uttered by Homer before even the foundation of the imperial city had been laid near the banks of the Tiber. And not a few sacred words, once heard amid the rugged scenery around Horeb, long before old Homer lived, have been handed down from age to age, and at length incorporated with our mother-speech. As an acknowledged medium of expressing thought, doubtless a word *may* survive a pyramid.—But, when we regard words as having being actually employed by individuals in the expression of thought, and as having thus formed part of human conduct, the subject assumes additional importance and solemnity. In this aspect, and it is to this that our attention is directed, when we think of the government of the

tongue, *words will survive pyramids*. Nay, the brief but emphatic sentence which we have quoted fails, even when thus altered, to express the unspeakable importance of that practical science which we endeavour to commend and illustrate. Words, regarded as part of human conduct, will not only survive pyramids, but also the earth on which those marvellous buildings have been erected. We read in the sacred oracles of truth,—“By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Whatever we possess of this world’s store, or whatever we desire to possess, or whatever we admire as possessed by others, shall be destroyed in the flames of the last day. “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” But no fires can destroy the results of our speaking. The influence of our words, though often lightly spoken, will then be discerned in the position assigned to us by the righteous Judge. That influence will be seen in the condition of those who have allowed themselves to be influenced, for weal or woe, by our words; but we shall ourselves, especially, experience the results of our speaking, in augmented joy or woe. We cannot afford to employ heedlessly such an instrument.

*Suitable control over our words may be attained.*—The red lightning has been an object of dread in every age. In no period of our world’s history, however

remote, could men fail to observe its awful power. They could neither overlook it, nor view it with unconcern. The savage and the philosopher, of every land, have been awed by the terrific grandeur of a thunder-storm. Whilst the fears of many were excited, the attention of all was arrested. But no studious and painstaking investigation followed. Men did not surmise that anything could be thus gained. If suffering, or loss, or death had been occasioned, these evils were regarded as unavoidable. The awful agent came and went, smote or spared, without any reference to human anxiety or remonstrance, skill or effort. Heathen priests, and cunning soothsayers, might endeavour to make even the lightning subservient to their selfish ends ; but no profitable inquiries were raised. Men knew not, at that time, anything which they could do to turn aside the bolt from their dwelling, nor how they could place themselves in a position of comparative safety. None of the wise ones then living so much as imagined that the terrible agent would ever submit to be examined, and controlled, and even employed in doing man's bidding. Hence, so long as human effort appeared to be in this respect useless, it was not put forth. The destroyer, apparently, could no more be directed than a comet in its erratic course ; and was therefore left, with comets and other ungovernables, to do its own pleasure. It was at length ascertained that even the lightning is subject to certain regular laws ; that it may be directed, by means employed by men, to the ground or elsewhere ; that, in favourable circum-

stances, a human being may so place himself as to defy the power of the dreaded invader; and that, evidently, much more might be learned concerning its operations. Thoughtful men speedily discovered, that, if the mysterious agent could not be divested of all his terrors, he might be induced often to lend his energy to benefit our race. He would render some aid to those engaged in the healing art. He could be taught to assist the miner in rending asunder the vast rocks which obstructed his passage. He would be of special use in the transmission of messages, as, in our service, he could traverse a continent in less time than we should take to walk round our flower-garden. No wonder that the subject speedily became one of absorbing interest. Men's minds were no longer paralysed by the conviction of helplessness; but, roused from the torpor of ages, they rose to claim this increased measure of authority granted unto them.—Now, we would not be understood as representing the right employment of the tongue as an easy task. No individual of our fallen race can, by his own unassisted efforts, gain the mastery over those evil propensities which would misdirect his speech. We are taught, "The tongue can no man tame." But we need not, and must not, allow anything like the torpor of despair to settle upon our soul. "With God all things are possible;" and the aid of the Divine Spirit has been graciously promised to all who seek it aright.

*We are justly held accountable by God for the right employment of our lips.*—We can neither use the power



of speech wrongfully, nor allow it to remain dormant, without being regarded as culpable. The talent must not be spent in the service of the foe, nor must it be buried in the earth. Most likely we have been often greatly mortified at our own faulty and mischievous blunders in speaking. Our errors were not mere mistakes, but sins. We have been ready to resolve never to speak, unless compelled by circumstances. We could sympathise with hermits, who used to flee to any solitude, however dreadful, that they might neither injure others, nor be injured themselves, through association with their fellow-men. But we read, "He also that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster." The general teaching of holy Scripture authorizes us to apply the inspired proverb to this, as well as to kindred subjects. In the employment of the goods entrusted to us by the Divine Proprietor, we must manifest that we are neither spendthrifts, nor of their kindred. The woman of Samaria was, evidently, a great talker. Such, doubtless, had been her reputation in Sychar, among those who were willing to associate with her. When conversing at Jacob's Well with the Messiah Himself, not yet recognised by her, she had for a long time a ready and somewhat pert reply to whatever He said. At length, however, the Lord Jesus disclosed her guilt, and a deep conviction of sin silenced her for a time. Peter, during many a month after he left the fisher's boat, as well as previously, was a great talker. Whether right or wrong, Simon must have his say.

Notwithstanding his ardent attachment to the Saviour, he made several serious mistakes. As we ponder the record of his unintentional blunders, and of the flippancy of the woman at Jacob's well, and the hasty words of many other great talkers, we are almost resolved to be known as silent people. But, would it not have been wrong in the woman to be silent when she had the opportunity of speaking to the townsfolk concerning the Messiah, who had not only disclosed to her the startling need of her soul, but also promised to impart to her, and to all penitent applicants, the "living water?" Would it not have been very faulty in St. Peter to be silent on the day of Pentecost, or on subsequent occasions, when he had around him perishing sinners who needed to hear of the Redeemer who died to save them? We must neither be silent nor speak mischievously. We must, by Divine grace, learn to speak aright.

P perchance you have occasionally been present in some place of worship when the organ was played wretchedly, and you heartily wished it would be still. But we have observed the harmonium in a sanctuary when no one could be found able and willing to play thereon. There it stood, silent enough, taking up room, and mocking the expectations of those who hoped for music. It forcibly reminded us of some poor backslider who used to say, with heartfelt joy, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul;" but now has neither the gladness nor its expression. To look on that silent har-

monium was not exhilarating. We desired neither discord nor silence, but sweet music in the service of the King of kings. So, as we have opportunity, we are to invite the perishing to "the fountain of living waters." "Let him that heareth say, 'Come.'"

*Advancement in this important science may be interrupted.*—We have admitted that many sciences, which are in themselves deeply interesting, and which might be turned to practical account, cannot be pursued by us to any great extent, because such employment of our time would interfere with present duties. This must ever be borne in mind by educationists. Among those who allow that the State should afford some aid in placing a good education within the reach of the children of the poor, there is diversity of opinion as to what constitutes a good education in their case. We must bear in mind, that they are all moral agents, and destined to live for ever. Their spiritual wants must not, therefore, be overlooked. We must also bear in mind, that their own welfare, and the prosperity of the commonwealth, demand that, unless there be special aptitude for some other employment, they should earn daily bread by manual labour. The education they need is that which will tend to fit them to be first-rate workmen; will teach them to make their homes happy; will call forth special aptitude, if it exist; and will disclose and commend to them the way to heaven. For other reasons, besides the want of money, the State cannot afford to train up a generation of clerks and verbal philosophers. The impossibility of learning all that

we should like to know, must also be borne in mind by those who desire properly to fulfil the duties of their station. A lad, who has recently commenced his apprenticeship, has a taste for mathematics. He begins with the introductory page of Euclid. He proposes to connect therewith the study of practical geometry. He recollects that the village-school-master, from whom he derived the elements of learning, used to supplement the meager income of his school by what neighbouring farmers paid for the admeasurement of land and crops. But the lad makes slow progress. He cannot give his mind fully to making a coat, or shoe, or chair, and at the same time construct an equilateral triangle upon a given straight line, or even call to mind the distinction between a rhombus and a rhomboid. The youth has wisely resolved that the allotted task of the day shall be done, and well done; so the geometry, both pure and practical, advances but slowly. We pity the baffled student, but we are sure that he will be both happier and more prosperous if he abide by the resolution he has formed. *Duty* first; and then, if there be room, *inclination*.—The practical science, however, which we commend may be profitably studied in the workshop and the sale-room, in the street or the dwelling, with our employers or our associates, with parents or brothers, in the company of the wise and of the foolish,—anywhere, so that we are in the path of duty; and any time, morning, noon, or night. Whether people speak to us kindly or sternly, truthfully or untruthfully, we may

be attaining suitable control over our own tongues. No task, in which we are lawfully engaged, will be performed less successfully in consequence of our endeavouring to speak as is right in the sight of God.

*The words uttered by others exercise a great influence over our minds.*—In a new country, the common-right of residents is large. Abraham and Lot, who had recently come from the other side of the Euphrates, and who had fought no battles, and paid no money, could quietly agree to separate, and seek pasturage for their flocks and herds wherever they two agreed. Until Europeans arrived in North America, the Red Indians wandered, with very little restriction, to any part of the forest or prairie which promised to yield the largest spoil. In such lands, the common-right is extensive. Almost every place in which you are disposed to wander is open to your feet. What is still more gratifying, almost everything you can lay hold on may be taken by your hand. You may, if hungry, partake of the bread-fruit, the yams, the oranges, or anything else you can find. You may hunt and shoot in any part of woodland and pasturage, of hill or vale, without any fear of action for trespass, and may select any bird or beast without reference to game-laws. You may fish along any shore, or in any river. You may dig for precious metals wherever you suppose such treasure is concealed. The inconveniences of such a land we do not stay to enumerate: we have now to do with the absence of enclosures. As the country, however, becomes occupied, the land is claimed, and your liberty is abridged. Boundaries

and fences appear, and are rapidly multiplied. In England there is little left for the stranger, except the hard turnpike. The remnants of greensward, where occasionally those mysterious people, the gipsies, encamp, have become few and diminutive. In most neighbourhoods they are rapidly disappearing. The poor man's cow used to obtain a little grass in summer, and playful girls plucked daisies and other wild flowers, and the lads tried a sort of circumscribed cricket; but these delights are almost numbered among the things of the past. A strong hand has enclosed most of the pretty places where all might freely wander; and we can only hope that a wise benevolence will multiply "people's parks" in their stead. It is true that our turnpikes have cost more money than any native potentate of Golconda and Peru could have furnished, and they provide capital opportunity for driving to those who can afford to keep a gig; but they are very hard and dusty in summer, and have a very narrow fringe of green. When visiting such a place as Cheltenham, we are first impressed with its grandeur and beauty; its mansions, and avenues, and gardens; and then we are impressed with its exclusiveness. Everywhere in England, and throughout the lands of long-established civilization, we find "Cautions to Trespassers" in abundance.—But even in such lands, we find very little of exclusiveness in the realms of speech. Here there has been large improvement, with a diminution of the ancient exclusiveness. Learned men in olden time had their "exoteric" and their "esoteric"

teachings ; but it is not so in our days. All is thrown open, in our public lectures, our Mechanics' Institutes, our discussion-classes, and elsewhere. Certainly, talk is provided for the million. But, when thus wandering in an unclaimed and unenclosed country, we must be very cautious. Poison abounds, as well as wholesome fruit. Pitfalls are there, as well as silver-mines. We may be enriched, but we may also be injured ; fed, but also destroyed. Be circumspect.

*The government of the tongue, in our own case, demands the utmost vigilance.*—We shall do well to remember, that the infirmities and failings we discern in others may represent weaknesses in ourselves. We observe, for instance, that some people have an unhappy proneness for disputation. It matters little what is the subject of discourse, their polemical tendencies are soon apparent. When two such individuals meet, the strife is often prolonged ; and sometimes it becomes furious. It is also observable, that, in these circumstances, little or no advancement is made toward the attainment of the truth. When a boy, my parent's home was in a seaport-town. The school to which I daily repaired happened to be on the opposite side of the tidal river which divided the town into two parts. On and about the 1st of March, a very large number of coasting-vessels were accustomed to leave the harbour, as from that date their assurance-policies covered their risk of being wrecked ; and their owners were naturally desirous that, after the winter, their ships should, if possible, be among

the earliest to the collieries in the north, and so to London with their freight. On one occasion, when the tide had so far risen as to allow the egress of the vessels, and the crews of several scores were desirous to leave, two ships approached the open bridge at the same moment. Neither captain was willing that the other should pass first. The result was, that the two ships became entangled together in the bridge-way, and were compelled to remain there the whole of the tide, to the mortification of those who were thus detained. No persons seemed suited, except us school-lads, who were very contentedly waiting for the closing of the bridge. As we were kept from school an hour or two, and then had to cross the river in a boat, it was a red-letter day with us.—No doubt, we have gravely moralized as we saw angry disputants, annoying others, exposing themselves to contempt, and making no advancement in the subject on hand. But would it not be well to inquire of our own consciences, whether or not we have ever occupied a position resembling that of one of the ships in the bridge-way; and, in like manner, to learn from other faults we may discern in those around us?

*The human voice is largely employed by Almighty God in accomplishing the salvation of our world.*—We read that Cornelius was directed by the angel to send for Simon Peter, “who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.” These words have been committed unto us. To Peter and his fellow-apostles they were given by the direct agency



of the Holy Ghost. To us they are given in the sacred Scriptures, and explained and applied by their Author, the Divine Spirit. We cannot over-estimate the importance of those words whereby perishing sinners may be saved. That instrument of the mind ought to be carefully guarded and employed, by which such words may be uttered. "The lips of the wise dispense knowledge." Our utterance may be as a life-giving stream. Peace, and purity, and gladness may be imparted thereby. Our words may not, indeed, convey blessedness so largely as those of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the other apostles. These eminent and inspired men were as those mighty rivers by any one of which many lands are enriched. But if we may not be as the Euphrates, the Nile, or the Rhine, we may be as a village-brook. Our words may be the means of conveying heavenly blessedness to some. The stream may not flow near royal palaces, or splendid mansions, or vast cities; but if, gliding from one cottage to another, it impart Divine life and comfort to some labouring man, or lonely widow, or little child, we ought to be thankful. May our speech be as the flowing stream, pure, and gentle, and beauteous; injuring none, and, at least, enriching a few! So shall it furnish evidence, in the great day, that we were partakers of the grace of God; and so shall we receive from the hand of the righteous Judge an infinite and eternal, though unmerited, reward.

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# THE POWER OF THE TONGUE:

OR,

CHAPTERS FOR TALKERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMAN VOICE.

“HE that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.” (Prov. xiii. 3.)

“Many have fallen by the edge of the sword; but not so many as have fallen by the tongue.” “Weigh thy words in a balance, and make a door and bar for thy mouth.” (The Son of Sirach.)

INDIA reposes beneath the British flag. That mighty empire furnishes one of the brightest jewels in the glorious crown worn by our monarch. The teeming millions of India have advantages incomparably superior to those enjoyed by their fathers during any earlier period of their marvellous history. British ascendancy in India was secured, and has been maintained, under God, by men who, with patient, loyal, and heroic hearts, employed to the utmost such resources as had been committed to

them. Colonel (afterwards Lord) Clive, who had but recently laid aside his pen, and left the desk where he had toiled for bread, was surrounded by a mere handful of men, when, in 1757, he overthrew the immense forces of Surajah Dowlah, at Plassey, and thus laid the foundation of that colossal empire which has since then been raised there. The illustrious though not faultless men who succeeded Clive were also of heroic spirit. Often called to contend against fearful odds, they were yet found equal to every emergency. So it was, when in May, 1857, a hundred years after the battle of Plassey, the terrible military revolt threatened to sweep away every vestige of British authority, and deliver up the millions of India to a military despotism of the most appalling kind. During the early part of that year there were some indications of an approaching storm. But in May it broke forth to an extent, and with a violence, far beyond what the most timid had feared. Scores of thousands of Hindoos, trained to war by English officers, and supplied with the most approved weapons, were speedily in open revolt. The mischief was daily spreading. Many brave English officers and soldiers had already fallen, and many of their wives and daughters had been cruelly butchered. There were not, throughout the wide-spread territory, forty thousand armed men of British extraction. The Home-Government was ignorant of the outbreak. Most of those who might be sent to the rescue would have to sail fifteen thousand miles. Who could foresee what would happen before their arrival?

The little bands of faithful men were, in many instances, widely separated from each other. Their resources were scanty. But there was the spirit of true heroism, and the determination to employ to the utmost such resources as they had. They would not be forgotten. Aid would be afforded. Until its arrival, they would hold India for their sovereign and country, whatever the risk. The honour of their native land, and the true welfare of countless millions, depended on the issue of the fearful struggle in which they thus unexpectedly found themselves engaged. The glorious diadem must not be torn from the brow of Queen Victoria by such ruffian hands; nor must the destinies of one-sixth of the human race be committed to such demon-like furies. Brave-hearted officers replied to the summons to surrender, "Never, while we have a bayonet or a man." Among the most distinguished heroes of that crisis were men who had long been known as the prayerful and devoted servants of God. Britain's sons triumphed. Our ascendancy throughout India was once more re-established,—to be employed henceforth, we trust, far more fully than heretofore, for the glory of God, and the true welfare of the Hindeos.

Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire the maintenance of His righteous and beneficent authority, and its extension throughout a redeemed world, have need to employ all the resources with which they have been entrusted. There is no occasion for despondency. The banner of the Cross

does advance, and will advance with increasing rapidity. Even in our own days many provinces have been recovered from revolt to professed allegiance, and myriads of hearts have rendered to their Lord a loving and holy fealty. St. John declared, "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called, THE WORD OF GOD. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Already do we behold the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. He is going forth conquering, and to conquer. His people are arousing themselves for new effort, and pleading for the enlarged baptism of the Holy Spirit, that they may do exploits. We wait for the hour when "great voices in heaven" shall be heard, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." There is no occasion for despondency; but the militant host of God's elect cannot afford to allow any of their resources to remain unemployed; and more fatal still would be the neglect which permitted the foe to seize, and pervert to his ends, any of those resources. We are summoned to the battle-field, and required to do our utmost. Gigantic

systems of error, which burdened and blighted our earth at the time when Peter was preaching to the multitude at Jerusalem, still exist. These lofty and extensive fortresses still frown defiantly upon God's host. Most of the countless captives immured therein have never heard the name of the Great Deliverer. We cannot deny, either, that some provinces which in apostolic days were to a large extent recovered to their allegiance, at a vast expense of toil, and treasure, and blood, and over which, for a time, the royal standard of heavenly mercy waved gloriously, have been lost. They are this day in the possession of the insulting foe. We have to confess, with shame, that the crime, and ignorance, and wretchedness prevalent in Britain are appalling, and seem to threaten our national eminence, and our very Christianity. We fear not for the final issue of the conflict. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." The Redeemer lives. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . His Name shall endure for ever: His Name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed." But we have reason to employ to the utmost all the resources placed at our disposal. Among the most important of these is the human voice. Our almighty and benevolent Creator has employed, age after age, numerous and varied agencies to accomplish His gracious purposes. On the other hand, the arch-foe has ever been on the alert to press these, as far as possible, into his

unhallowed service, and use them for the accomplishment of his vile and cruel aims. The banner of the truth, in its advance, has always been surrounded by auxiliaries; and the standard of error, during its slow retreat, has had many confederated supporters. But among the many and powerful agencies which are at work, moulding the material of our race, and influencing its destinies, we believe that man's own voice is one of the most important. Its power, whether exercised for good or for evil, is exceedingly great. Several considerations may be suggested, which will make this apparent; and the more fully we perceive it, the more likely we shall be to claim to the utmost the power thus placed within our reach, and to employ it for the welfare of humanity, and the honour of the Lord.

1. *The human voice can express our meaning with great distinctness.*—Because of this explicitness, inducements to walk in the paths of virtue, when thus placed before us, or temptations to wander in the crooked ways of sin, have a special power. Our energies are not expended in the attempt to ascertain the meaning intended, nor is the force lost whilst we are so doing. We generally know at once what is meant. The patriarch Job, in an early period of our world's history, understood that lessons of heavenly wisdom were frequently conveyed by ordinary circumstances of human life. A Divine Providence was engaged in overruling these events, and seeking thus to promote man's true welfare. "God speaketh once, yea, twice; yet man perceiveth it not." Sickness,

the approach of death, even dreams of the night, have a voice uttering truths which men need to hear. "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." But Job gave special prominence to the words of a faithful "messenger" who should vindicate the ways of God, and make His righteousness apparent. We are, at best, but partially capable of understanding and applying the lessons taught by events around us. Dreams admit of various interpretations, and many of the most impressive providential arrangements have been strangely misunderstood. We have known agricultural distress ascribed to the use of barometers, as a prying into those secret things reserved by the Lord as His own peculiar domain. The appearance of a comet used to be regarded as an omen of evil. Men were thus far agreed in an opinion which was erroneous. But there was no farther ground common to them all. Whether the fiery monitor presaged war, or famine, or pestilence, who could tell? Is Octavius or Antony to be overthrown? Does it signify heaven's displeasure against the Norman for invading England, or against Harold for daring to dispute the alleged bequest of the Confessor? Are the startled nations to understand that the blood which flowed on Black Bartholomew's Day was too much or too little? From what is witnessed in the heavens, and on the earth, much may be learned. Yet men are often perplexed; and must either patiently suspend their judgment, or they will grossly blunder. But lessons



of heavenly wisdom have often been uttered by human lips, so as to admit of no mistake whatever. The Israelites knew what was meant when Moses said unto them, "The Lord God of your fathers hath said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt." David knew what was meant when Nathan declared, "Thou art the man." The persecuted saints at Smyrna knew what was meant when Jesus said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

In like manner, temptation may, by means of words, be so presented as to preclude any possibility of mistake. The three young men, on the plains of Dura, who nobly refused to pay adoration to an image, though golden and colossal, could not misunderstand the threat of the enraged monarch before whom they were placed, and from whom they had received large favours. Nebuchadnezzar's meaning was plain enough:—"If ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" The temptation was presented with unabated force. Most likely, the musicians were playing loyal and national airs. The numerous instruments, of which they seem to have been somewhat vain, since they are enumerated so formally and repeatedly, were, doubtless, employed so as to gratify

the haughty monarch. The three brave-hearted confessors would scarcely be able to comprehend all that was indicated by these strains. The music of Judea was widely different from this. They would have been more at home if some of their aged compatriots, who remembered the sacred melody of the Lord's house, had taken their harps from the willows, and played and sung as in ancient days. Sometimes, no doubt, these young men had listened while such aged ones, with faltering voices and trembling hands, attempted the music of happier years. The youthful had thus become familiar with the ode of Miriam, and the sacred song of Moses, and the beautiful psalms of David. The distant sound of one of these Hebrew melodies, though indistinctly heard, would have awakened thoughts and emotions with which the idolaters of Babylon were unacquainted. But what could the dauntless servants of Jehovah discover in these strains, which called the assembled multitudes again and again to prostrate themselves before the burnished image? Were the plaintive sounds intended to represent the parting of Babylon's warriors from wives and sisters, mothers and daughters, when about to proceed on some distant and dangerous expedition? Were those sounds, astoundingly loud, to represent the onset, as fierce men rushed on their foes? Are those shrill and piercing sounds to recall the cries of the vanquished? Are those sounds, low and feeble, to imitate the wail of the wounded and the captives? Do the musicians now celebrate, in strains of triumphal excitement, the power of their god, and

the glory of their monarch?—It is possible that in that music, though indistinctly comprehended, there was much calculated to unnerve the three confessors. But, most certainly, the terrible words of the monarch, because of their distinctness, presented the temptation to apostasy in its most influential form. Thus, every day, for good or evil, the utterances of the tongue are distinct.

2. *The human voice possesses largely the power of persuasion.*—Whilst good Nehemiah, and those who were with him, were diligently engaged in building the city and temple of their fathers, there were many enemies who sought to frustrate their efforts. We are informed that Nehemiah received several letters from some of these persons. Sanballat sent verbal messages four times, and then prepared and sent a letter, in which he professed to have some degree of friendship for Nehemiah, and of concern for his welfare; and, after stating certain reports which were in circulation, injurious to the character of the Jewish governor, requested that they might have an interview. Tobiah also persisted in writing to Nehemiah, chiefly, it seems, in a threatening style. Now, in this case the epistles of Sanballat and Tobiah had much the same effect on the veteran servant of God as their speech would have had. Nehemiah would hold no personal intercourse with them, because he was not willing that the rebuilding of the city and temple should be delayed, and because he well knew that they wished to injure him. He therefore replied, “I am doing a great work, so that

I cannot come down : why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you ?” But, if the brave and devout Jew had been compelled to listen to the foes of Israel and of Israel’s God, we are quite satisfied that their speeches, however flattering or threatening, would not have caused him to swerve in the slightest degree from the arduous task assigned to him. When Sanballat wrote to him, and concluded his letter with the words, “ Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together,” he probably cherished the hope, that, however Nehemiah might be surrounded by a faithful body-guard as he entered the appointed village in the plains of Ono, there would be some favourable opportunity of assassinating him ; and, if not, he might be induced to lay aside this project of rebuilding Jerusalem. The enemies were satisfied that much would be accomplished if they could persuade Nehemiah to take counsel with them. Their scheme manifested great knowledge of human nature. The voice can do much more than any letter. Information can be conveyed in an epistle, but much more can be effected by the human voice. An earnest speaker frequently succeeds in producing conviction, exciting emotion, and influencing the will, when a letter, however ably written, would have been altogether ineffectual. For good or evil, the tongue exerts a mighty power of persuasion.—That wealthy merchant is already possessed of immense property, and is now accumulating riches more rapidly than ever. He is storing all up for those who have no real affection for him,

and who would be glad to hear of his death. Yet he can easily resist any appeal to his benevolence which comes in a written form. The suppliant may be his own brother's widow, pleading for the children of him with whom he once played in and around their parents' home ; yet the selfish man can throw the letter into the fire, and then, muttering something about past indolence and extravagance, place himself at his desk, and proceed to balance his ledger. But that same man, if decoyed into the miserable cellar where she now exists at whose wedding he was present, and where the little ones have long felt the pangs of hunger, can scarcely resist the pleadings of their lips.—That poor tradesman, on the other hand, knows full well that he has no capital to spare ; and, therefore, that he has no right to become bondsman for an acquaintance who is about to make a reckless dash for a splendid fortune or bankruptcy. He would make a circuit of five miles rather than meet the man who has made the unreasonable request. He could answer a hundred letters politely, but in the negative. Yet, if he unfortunately yield so far as to listen to all that the fortune-maker has to say, he may yield still further, and attach his name to that document which for some months is to be to him as a spectre haunting his path in all solitary hours, and at length a cruel destroyer, rendering desolate a home which might have been the abode of peace and plenty.—Many have thankfully acknowledged, that when in early manhood they were in danger of forgetting God, and forsaking His sanctuary, there was a blessed influence

exerted by the voice of a pious mother, far beyond all formal instruction ; and many have had to deplore the disastrous power exercised over their undecided minds by the words of ungodly associates. It frequently happens, that whether a man who has just received his hard-earned wages, will spend the evening adding to the comfort of his family, or wasting his money in the ale-house, depends on the circumstance of meeting or avoiding some dissolute work-fellow ; and not unfrequently has the visit of an ungodly man to the house of God, which resulted in his salvation, been brought about by the kind invitation of some pious neighbour. An inspired writer warns us against the solicitations of evil men : " My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not ;" and points out the mode in which many are entangled in the net of the evil woman : " With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks." The gracious power exerted by those who employ their voice aright, is also declared : " The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips : he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity."

3. *The human voice is a gift which has been entrusted to most of us.*—Occasionally, in some public crisis, men are raised up, and so circumstanced, gifted, and aided, that, by the employment of political power, they leave a distinct impression on the national

character. The result will remain for ages ; and generations, then unborn, will have to bless or bewail the part they acted. The Prince of Orange, afterwards William the Third, King of Great Britain, acted nobly in such circumstances, and wisely employed the power with which he was entrusted. Perhaps the late historian who has written so eloquently concerning that period has drawn the character of his hero in colours somewhat too brilliant. But diamonds, even when ascertained to be imperfect, are highly prized. No one cares to examine a huge paving-stone in order to discover what flaws there may be. A large diamond, though the bright sunshine does disclose some trifling defect, is worth a myriad paving-stones. The great Hollander, though not angelic, was wise, and brave, and philanthropic. He was Britain's deliverer in the hour of her peril. We may wish there were no spots in the sun ; but we are very thankful for the luminary as it is. Astronomers are welcome to tell us concerning the dark places we never discern ourselves. They must not, however, ask us to flee from the light, and take up our abode in dens, or among the malaria-swamps, associated with doleful creatures, or exposed to pestiferous exhalations. Though the cavern were an ancient one, and lighted with candles of their own manufacture, we should scarcely comply. We would rather have the sunshine, bright, and blessed, and life-giving. We revere the memory of the Protestant monarch and deliverer. From the days of the glorious Revolution, Britain's course has been

onward and upward. But influence like that entrusted to William has been possessed by few, and is, certainly, not committed to us.—Louis XIV. of France, the great opponent of William, may be mentioned as one who mis-employed large political power. Already, by the Edict of Nantes, a foundation had been laid for religious liberty in France. By the revocation of that Edict, in 1685, Louis gave an impetus to the Romish priesthood throughout his dominions in a course of intolerance and vice which rendered the very name of Christianity hateful, and largely assisted in bringing about the Reign of Terror. When Louis ascended the throne, some of the earlier lessons in civil freedom had already been learnt by the French. A “Bill of Rights,” voluntarily given to the people at that time, might have saved Paris from torrents of blood, France from successive revolutions, and Europe from years of misery. When the Grande Monarque demanded that these first lessons should be unlearned, and that France should submit to an absolute despotism, he was employing a pressure which kept all quiet for the time, but gave terrific violence to the catastrophe of a century later. We may naturally wish that the French king had acted more like his great opponent. But we shall never be responsible for the employment of power like that possessed by either William or Louis. It is deeply interesting to consider the history of such men, and of such periods. But we gather little of direct practical instruction suited to our widely different circumstances.—But, if we have not the



power of a throne, we have the power of the voice. We have no sceptre, but we have a tongue. The subject immediately under consideration has no such grandeur as that which appertains to royal personages ; but it has a directness of personal application, and a universality of interest, beyond these. The cottage in which I dwell is not so magnificent as the palace of my sovereign ; but it is my home. With few exceptions, our entire race employ this power. Children at school are uttering words, kind or unkind, truthful or false. Parents at home are thus doing good or harm. The Home Missionary and the infidel Lecturer use this weapon. It is employed in all places where men assemble, and everywhere its power is felt.

4. *The human voice is a power which, with few exceptions, is felt by all.*—Much is said, in these days, concerning the power of the press. The invention of printing has exercised a mighty influence over our race ; and will, in the future, do so in a yet greater degree. Perhaps, in repeating this common affirmation, we ought not to forget the invention of paper. The employment of movable type was almost certain to follow this. We are thankful that, in a momentous struggle, the servants of the Most High had the earliest advantage from the use of the printing-press. Most appropriate was it that the blessed Book of God should be first multiplied by this invention. Many rejoiced that the first message conveyed by the electric telegraph should be taken from the sacred Oracles ; an ascription of praise to the Giver of all

good, and a declaration of good-will to human kind. So we rejoice that the printing-press was first employed in multiplying copies of Holy Scripture, and thus assisting the spread of that Reformation which poured light on this land, and prepared it to convey that light to distant nations. This earliest employment of the press furnishes an instance of the manner in which God's word is, indirectly, the means of promoting external progress. But for the demand which even then began to be made for the Book of books, we know not how long the use of movable type might have been delayed. Henceforth, however, much wearisome toil was to be superseded. Soon was England to receive from Tyndale an edition of the precious volume in our mother-tongue. Then was the Word to go forth throughout the world. Even to many-handed Rome, the destruction or suppression of the Holy Scriptures became impossible. Of late years, the multiplication of copies of the Scriptures has taken place with glorious rapidity. The British and Foreign Bible Society sends forth copies by millions, and is emulated in its holy enterprise by other Societies on both sides the Atlantic. Various Societies are engaged in the dissemination of good books. Thus, by means of the press, light is spreading through our own land, and visiting the places where darkness has hitherto prevailed.— On the other hand, the press is arrayed in frightful antagonism to the truth. In London far more publications of an injurious character are issued, than of a beneficial tendency. Covers prepared by evan-

gelical Tract Societies have been employed both by Papists and Mormonites, to secure for their errors admission into Christian families. The Papacy has never sought to disseminate the Holy Scriptures in the language of the people ; and still it visits with a heavy curse those who read God's Book without a priest's permission. But Rome has begun to provide a literature for the people. Thus it teaches that the old relics have not lost their efficacy ; that the inquisitors of former days acted aright in burning heretics ; that the Saxons of England never did any act of kindness to the Irish ; and that all men must believe the new doctrine concerning the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, now authorized by Pio Nono.—Some have been ready to conclude that henceforth the press must accomplish almost everything. We cannot think so. The great battle will not be fought by the press, either exclusively or chiefly. Modern warfare is certainly moving to ground very far apart from that occupied in ancient times. The long-bow with its cloth-yard shaft, and the cross-bow with its bolt, have both disappeared. Some think that the wooden walls of England are soon to be withdrawn from the ocean, where they have maintained their repute during the vicissitudes of a thousand years. But, in the grand moral conflict, the human voice will never become either silent or secondary. When all are able to read, the voice will retain that special power of persuasion to which reference has been already made. But when will all be able to read ? The Christian churches will have

to maintain their position many years before that is effected. In some lands there are yet no books to read. In many lands few can read. It is doubtful whether more than one in a hundred of the population of Rome, city of learning and the fine arts, can read. In our own country many are unable; and hosts more, who have learned to read, are unable to do so with such readiness as to find pleasure in the employment. Multitudes are too weary with their daily toil to give the necessary attention. A large proportion of those who have been well taught in youth are too busy, or too indolent, to spend fifteen minutes in reading during the day. But, with few exceptions, all can hear, and do hear, and hear words of some sort almost every hour of the day. They receive their deepest impressions from men, rather than from books. Their characters are moulded by the power of the tongue, rather than by the power of the press.

5. *The human voice exerts an influence during every period of life.*—Among the powerful agencies affecting the moral condition of our world, must be numbered the various passions of the soul. Compared with these, all external appeals are often powerless. Whatever the pleadings, reasonings, and promises of Jesuits, addressed to Charles the Second, he prized the crown of England too highly to risk it for the blessing of the Pope. Charles knew that Vauxhall offered a more favourable opportunity of indulging his love of feasting, licentiousness, and display, than he had ever had as an exile at the French Court.

He, therefore, would make no attempt to compel the sturdy men of England to bow their necks to an all-grasping ecclesiastic. Passion thus far prevailed. It prevailed, alas! equally, against godly counsel. Charles had great respect for some godly men, Conformists and Nonconformists. Solemn lessons were suggested by the tragical end of his father. His own exile ought to have impressed on his mind the uncertainty of earthly good. The terrible conflagration, in which a large portion of his metropolis was consumed, and the dreadful plague by which myriads of his subjects were hurried into eternity, should have taught him to seek a preparation for heaven. In other days the Cavaliers, vanquished on the battle-field, had in their various retreats boisterously drunk the health of their youthful and exiled king, wishing him his own again, and often profaning the Name of the Most High. The twenty-ninth of May had witnessed the excited joy of the changeful multitude. Forgetful of the Star-Chamber and of ship-money, and anticipating no cruel oppression from him who for the present stood by the side of the throne, the assembled crowds hailed the restored monarch as though he had been the greatest of benefactors. Unhappily, passion triumphed over the teachings of Holy Writ, as well as over the importunities of the Papacy.—The desires of man are the most powerful of all pleaders. They are stronger than any external appeal. But they do not, in complete number and fulness of power, accompany man throughout his journey. They succeed each

other in an ascertained order. But the human voice, though, like all other external forces, feeble when compared with these, exerts its powerful influence throughout the pilgrimage. During infancy, the suggestions of ambition are unheard. Position, power, patronage, precedence, as yet present no enticement. But the babe, seated on its mother's knee, is listening to her voice, and receiving impressions which, in all probability, will never be erased. A lad at school is, generally, an entire stranger to that insane desire for amassing wealth which too often becomes, in later life, the master-passion of the soul. But the voices of those around him, of tutors, of the sixth-form, and even of youngsters, are felt to be powerful. During manhood, the trifles which held the mind of childhood in subjection have lost their power. The sceptre once so absolute is now unacknowledged. But the man is influenced greatly by those who, near to himself, are engaged in the struggles of the world. At the close of life, many strong passions have lost their force. The recollection of eager strife for various objects may remain; but the aged man now wonders that he should ever have deemed them worthy of such effort. The phantom shapes now appear in their real worthlessness. Still, however, there are human voices heard around that old man's chair, or near his dying bed. These exert an influence over the soul which is so speedily to know the mysteries of the unseen world. As instruments, they cause the final neglect of salvation to be more complete, or the cry for mercy

to be more earnest, or the triumph of long-established faith to be more triumphant. From the cradle to the grave we are influenced, for good or evil, by the power of the tongue.

6. *The human voice makes its power to be felt each day of our lives.*—Festival occasions, such as Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas, are much prized during our youth, and equally appertain to old age. Indeed, as life advances, those anniversaries seem to return more rapidly, as though the wheel received additional momentum, and steadily increased the speed at which it revolves. But the influence of the human voice is not like that exerted by anniversary occasions. It is as the reservoir to which, morn, noon, and eve, we are accustomed to repair. We do not merely hear the sound now and then, as we hear the bells announcing the return of some festival. We listen every day. That reservoir at which we drink every day must have a mighty influence on our health. Purity in its waters is of incalculable importance.—No device in warfare could be more dreadful than the poisoning of reservoirs and wells, to which the inhabitants of Spain and Portugal were at length driven by their French oppressors. Much had they borne before they resorted to this; but we could wish that they had never yielded to the horrid suggestion. It was high time, indeed, for the welfare of the Peninsula, of Europe, and of the world, that the myrmidons of Napoleon should be driven from the territories they had invaded; and England's great warrior had commenced that task. But neither Wellesley, nor the

country which he served, would have sanctioned the employment of poison in the manner just indicated. It is no wonder, however, that the plan was adopted. The device was cruel, but likely to be successful. If the intended victims drank not one day, they would probably do so the next. If the poison was too largely diluted to prove fatal at once, its frequent use would in the end occasion death.—On the other hand, those are public benefactors who provide a fountain for the use of their fellows. Every day many are refreshed there. Every day the force of temptation is rendered less powerful to some who have been accustomed to repair to the beer-shop.—In like manner, the streams of human speech are constantly flowing, and are incessantly exerting an influence for good or evil on those around. Persons of all grades, dispositions, ages, and circumstances, repair thither. They listen every day. From whatever else they abstain, this forms part of their daily portion. Speech cannot, therefore, do otherwise than exert a vast influence on the character and destinies of our race.

7. *The human voice largely modifies the character of the speaker.*—This reflex influence of our words demands more serious attention. We must not forget that however we succeed or fail, by our words, in forming the character of others, we are doing much, thereby, toward the formation of our own. It is very likely that our words will now, for the most part, bear a considerable resemblance to our present character. It is also likely that our



character will be raised higher, or depressed lower, in accordance with our attempts or neglect to govern our tongues ; and that the permanent form it assumes will correspond to the words we have used. Go into a forge. Take up and examine the ponderous hammer which the smith has just placed near the anvil. It has been used several years, in the formation of numberless articles. One day it has been employed in making some little nails ; another day, an immense ploughshare ; now a horse-shoe, and then a rivet ; on some occasions the sharp teeth of a harrow, and on others the tire of a cart-wheel. It has accomplished tasks long familiar, and tasks such as the old farmers had never seen in their early days, and therefore regarded with doubt and suspicion. But all the multifarious tasks have affected it but little. The instrument employed in the formation of other things has not itself been changed in any corresponding manner.—But the employment of our voice has a most important influence on the formation of our character. Generally, a deeper and more abiding impression is left on the mind of the speaker, than of any other person. That impression may not be what the hearers would suppose ; for the words may not have been uttered in sincerity. But impression of some sort, for good or evil, is left upon our own souls as we speak to others. The traces will be found after many days, and may abide for ever. He who, by the right employment of his voice, assists in making bad men good, and good men better, is thus far

likely to become good himself; whilst the man who, by the culpable use of his lips, helps to make the heedless bad, and bad men worse, is sure to become bad himself. If, because I am a little angry, I employ provoking words and epithets, I shall probably make my auditor angry too; but it is almost certain that I shall become highly-excited myself, and may lose all self-control in downright passion. If, because things have not occurred according to my desire, I pour forth a torrent of peevish words, it is very possible that I shall soon have around me as many grumblers as there happen to be persons within the sound of my voice, and thus procure a Babel of discordant sounds; but it is still more likely that my own peevishness will be largely augmented. If, on the other hand, in circumstances of provocation, I utter the kindest words which the case admits; and, when disappointed, the most cheerful, I shall do good to those near me, but shall find still more benefit to my own heart. Most likely, whilst I am speaking, a little sunshine will enter the minds of others; certainly my own mind will be illumined. Then, the repeated influence thus exerted by the voice on the mind of the speaker results in permanent modification of character. A person in delicate health may find that a trifling indulgence in what is hurtful produces, as its immediate effect, a painful headache. The mischief may appear to end with that. But a thousand such indulgences—every day a little too much sleep, and too little exercise, or too much food, and of too rich kind—will result in chronic disease

which sets at defiance the skill of the faculty. That weakly one may find suitable exercise and self-denial followed by a better night's rest. The benefit may seem to go no farther. But the right course pursued for years is likely to ensure long life, and a vigorous old age. So an improper use of the tongue often produces a chronic disease of the mind ; and its right employment will ensure permanent well-being.

8. *The human voice produces results which are endless in duration.*—In this important particular, speaking resembles other forms of human conduct. The immortality of the soul, and the account due to God, impart unutterable importance to its doings. Nothing can be justly regarded as trifling which affects its condition or destiny. Here is a material taking shape, which is to remain for ever, and upon the character of which the most important results depend. Over this material, in ourselves, and in others, our words, as well as our actions, exert a powerful and abiding influence. Mighty monarchs in olden time frequently employed a considerable portion of the vast resources at their command in the erection and adornment of some great city. This city was, perhaps, called by their name. At any rate, it was intended as an abiding evidence of their wealth, and power, and taste. Such builders would have been much disheartened, had they foreseen the result of their labours. Had some augur, in whom they placed implicit confidence, approached the monarch in the hour of his pride, when viewing from some neighbouring eminence the extent and mag-

nificence of the wondrous city, and whispered into the royal ear the final history of the towers and walls, the palaces and gardens, now spread beneath them like some fairy vision, that proud king would have been dismayed. The soothsayer would have had to say, "All these shall be overthrown, and then left to utter neglect. No sound of martial music, or of joyous revelry, or of earnest toil, or of childish sports, will here be heard. No sign of human life will here be discerned. Occasionally some traveller from far-distant lands will find his way hither, and perchance muse on the uncertainty of earthly good. The men of learning and leisure who will visit this spot will come from lands now uninhabited, and the abode of wild beasts; or from lands where the savage now roams. But then these men shall be familiar with a civilization, compared with which that of which we boast is barbarism. Those travellers will endeavour in vain to trace the boundaries where this fair city now stands. Your name shall be spelt out with difficulty. Everywhere the works of our hands shall have perished."—But, whilst the cities of antiquity have thus passed away, the results of human conduct can never be obliterated. The fabric we are raising, of virtuous character or vicious, will, when once it takes its place in the unseen world, remain for ever. The essential character of that fabric will never be altered, and can never be destroyed. On the foundation which we have laid during the present life, and on which we for a little time built, we must ever remain. To the

superstructure we shall, doubtless, be constantly adding. But the foundation and the essential character of our task will never change. In thus determining our final condition of blessedness, or of woe, our words have an important part. Such is the power of the tongue.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE AUTHORIZED STANDARD OF SPEECH.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah viii. 20.)

"Servant of God, well done! well hast thou fought  
The better fight, who singly hast maintain'd  
Against revolted multitudes the cause  
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;  
And for the testimony of truth hast borne  
Universal reproach; (far worse to bear  
Than violence;) for this was all thy care,  
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds  
Judged thee perverse."—MILTON.

WHAT is an inch? Smile not at the question, courteous reader; but give at once a sufficient reply. What is an inch? Perhaps you may find that a satisfactory answer to this simple question requires some little thought. We might say, The twelfth part of a foot. But what is a foot? One-third of a yard. But what is a yard? One of the seventeen hundred and sixty fragments into which a mile may be supposed to be divided. But what is a mile? We will not refer to degrees, geographical or astronomical; as, in the former case, we should speedily find ourselves at the ends of the earth; and, in the other, among distant worlds, vainly inquiring, What is an inch? We will leave the ascending scale alto-

gether, having derived no further advantage therefrom than the opportunity of discerning a little more clearly the need of a fixed standard.—But what is an inch? Try the descending scale. Our ancestors did so. “Some of the old statutes expressly make the inch to be the length of three barleycorns, placed end to end, round and dry, from the middle of the ear. Standards were made, no doubt, from this definition; or, at least, it was supposed that, if the existing standard should be lost, the barleycorns would help to restore it. Readers may smile at so simple a contrivance; but the same principle, carried a little farther, might be made very efficient in preserving a measure. Suppose, for example, that the Government were now to think it desirable to recover the three-barleycorn inch, or, at least, to invent one capable of being recovered. They would put together, not three barleycorns, but three thousand, or thirty thousand, or many different collections of three thousand, or more. The average inch deduced from these would be capable of being recovered at any time from the same grain grown in the same soil.” This brief consideration of a practical difficulty, which had to be overcome, will serve to place before our minds the great importance of having a fixed standard in all matters which involve the welfare of mankind. “The first attempts to be scientific in matters of measurement, made in this country, date from the beginning of the seventeenth century. After nearly a century of communication between statesmen and philosophers on the subject of a uniform

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measure, Mr. Baily visited the Exchequer standard, and his account is as follows:—‘I have had an opportunity of seeing this curious instrument, of which it is impossible at the present day to speak too much in derision and contempt. A common kitchen-poker, filed at the ends in the rudest manner, by the most bungling workman, would make as good a standard. It has been broken asunder, and the two pieces have been dove-tailed together; but so badly, that the joint is nearly as loose as that of a pair of tongs.’ Certainly it was desirable, in the commencement of the last century, when Britain was preparing to take the place she now occupies at the head of the world’s commerce, that science and art should together provide a more satisfactory reply to the inquiry, ‘In English trade, what is an inch?’”

More than two thousand years before good King Alfred ascended the throne of England, and sought to regulate and protect its trade, the question had received a satisfactory solution in the East. In the law given to the Israelites, while they were in the wilderness, this important subject was not overlooked; and, in the arrangements concerning the executive government, it was provided for. In our days, even wise men are somewhat perplexed concerning the weights and measures of ancient days. Much pains have been expended in the attempt to ascertain precisely what was the cubit of olden time. Perhaps it is doubtful whether we have yet arrived at exactness and certainty in this matter. Much doubt attaches to the measures employed of old by various



nations. We feel somewhat of this doubt when reading the sacred history. The difference of opinion is confined within narrow limits; yet such difference exists. But we have reason to believe that the Divine King and Legislator of the Jews condescended so to arrange that there should be no need of uncertainty among that people when buying and selling. Hence we find frequent reference to "the shekel of the sanctuary," as a well-known standard, and a standard around which had been placed the solemn sanctions of religion. The Holy Place, where they drew near to God, reminded the Israelites of their obligation to deal equitably with each other. In all cases of perplexity, or dispute, appeal was to be made to the Levites. Those who were set apart for the service of the omnipotent Jehovah were also to have charge of those standards by which the commerce of their brethren was regulated. (1 Chron. xxiii. 29.) The standards of the ephah and the shekel, and the other weights and measures used by the Israelites, have not been preserved to our times, because this was not necessary. But they were provided when needed. He who is infinite in majesty and power overlooked not these matters. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth." Yet He disdained not to legislate concerning the measure of barley which the labouring man should receive for his hard-earned silver; and to provide

that the coarse linen with which the widow sought to clothe her children should be sold to her in full measure; and that the orphans should not be selfishly defrauded of any portion of their pittance. All departures from the authorized standards were declared to be hateful to the Divine King of Israel: "Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord."

We are not surprised, therefore, to observe, that, in His holy book, the Lord has provided a standard to which He requires our speech to be conformed. In some respects a law was more needed here than even in the regulation of weights and measures. In the employment of words, the right is not always easily distinguishable; and, therefore, it might be mistaken by the ignorant, or overlooked by the heedless, or evaded by the selfish. It is comparatively easy to ascertain whether or not a balance is equal; and he who employs one by which he is enriched, and his neighbour defrauded, must know that he is a rogue. But words by which others are injured may be **freely employed, and the speaker have no painful conviction of wrong-doing.** It was very needful that there should be directions for speech, which should be at once ~~unerring~~ and authoritative. Such a standard must be ~~sent~~ from heaven. The human mind could form ~~nothing~~ suitable. Now and then the impulse ~~was~~ generous; as when one in ancient ~~times~~ because he was a man, nothing ~~for~~ the welfare of the race ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~of~~

that sentiment secured for the poet-orator the applause of the multitude then listening to him. But when the crowd had dispersed, and once more entered on the struggle of life, the generous sentiment, so recently applauded, had little influence over their conduct or words. We deny not the occasional rising of noble impulses within the human breast; for a measure of Divine influence is given to all. But this furnishes no sufficient standard of speech or conduct. The combined forces of human nature furnish no such standard. A Secularist orator and champion boasts that he has discovered the true directory to human welfare and progress in these combined forces; one disposition of the heart holding another in check, and a given number of evil impulses resulting in one good one. No doubt, selfishness in one form does frequently prevent the manifestation of selfishness in other forms; as when covetousness serves as a check upon excess in eating, drinking, and display. But in these combined forces we have no sufficient standard of human conduct. For proof of their utter inefficiency, we have only to observe the conduct of those around us in any neighbourhood. The precepts of heathen moralists often failed. Here and there we meet with gems of thought on subjects of duty; but these are surrounded with a mass of error, which neutralizes and almost conceals them. Even writers on Moral Philosophy, like Archdeacon Paley, who have written with the Bible open before them, have sometimes greatly blundered, apparently through placing their own reasonings, and the writings of

heathen moralists, too much on a level with the oracles Divine. We need a standard of heavenly origin, perfect, and of indisputable authority, to which we may bring our words, and from which we may gain constant direction how we ought to employ that sacred trust, the power of speech. *Such a standard we find in Holy Scripture.*

Instruction concerning the right employment of our lips is here presented in various forms. In consequence of this variety, the practical truth is the more likely to influence beneficially the minds of all. Sometimes we find that the right government of the tongue is made the subject of explicit direction and command. Again, illustration is largely employed, so as to awaken attention, and press the imagination and the memory into this important work. Then, in other sections of sacred writ, the beauty and happy results of talking wisely, and the evil and painful results of speaking foolishly, are depicted by actual example; and a sympathy with our fellows is thus employed for our own good. By these, and other means, the excellencies which we are required to attain, and the defects we must avoid, are set forth in their true character. One by one, or grouped together, these pass before us. Lesson by lesson is taught. Test by test is supplied. Error by error is exploded. The standard is absolutely complete. That which is affirmed concerning the word of God as a directory in all branches of human conduct, is, of course, true concerning it as our infallible guide in speaking. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of

God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Let us, then, consider the essential elements of right speaking, as placed before us in Holy Scripture.

1. *Truthfulness.* — Those who navigate seas which are unknown, or but partially known, must depend, to a great extent, on charts provided for them. In those charts, the mariner expects to find marked down each jutting headland, or dangerous rock, or sunken reef, the indentations of the coast, the islands, the beacon-lights, and all other objects needful to be known. Of course, the most essential quality of such a chart is correctness. That upon which so much depends ought to be drawn with the utmost carefulness. None ought to attempt the execution of such a task, who are not fully competent; and he who, being competent, purposely misrepresented the facts of the case would prove himself a villain. If correctness be wanting, no compensation can possibly be made. The materials of which the chart and its case are formed may be of first-rate quality, and the workmanship may manifest great skill; yet the whole is worse than worthless. It might have a value as a plaything, because of its adornments. But when placed in the hands of the master of a ship, as a sufficient guide in unknown and dangerous seas, it is but a fatal snare. It brings with it no advantage, and will, most likely, ensure the destruction of those who confide in it. The man should be honoured,

who, by careful investigation and studious toil, provides a trustworthy chart for future voyagers. But he who, from selfish motives, puts forth an incorrect one, deserves the execration of his fellows.

Now, it often happens that in the affairs of life we are compelled, in similar manner, to rely on the testimony of others. Sooner or later most of us are as those who navigate strange and perilous seas. Others possess information, which, if correctly imparted, would prove invaluable to us; whilst deception would be fatal to our hopes. In matters of minor importance, we are, day by day, as those who furnish or receive needful guidance. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance, that our words should faithfully represent the facts of the case. In a chart, nothing could compensate for the concealment of some sunken reef. In our words, nothing can serve as an equivalent for truth. Our language is to be as a faithful chart, in which everything is represented exactly as it is. Hence, we find that great prominence is given to this element of right speaking. Holy Scripture places it, in various forms, before our eyes.

Direct injunction abounds. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." (Exod. xx. 16.) "If the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you." (Deut. xix. 18, 19.) Further: "A lying tongue" is declared to be "an abomination" unto the Lord. (Prov. vi. 17.) "The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but

a lying tongue is but for a moment." (Prov. xii. 19.) "The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death." (Prov. xxi. 6.) "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." (2 Cor. i. 12.) "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." (2 Cor. ii. 17.) "Speaking the truth in love." (Eph. iv. 15.) "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." (Eph. iv. 25.)

The deception practised by Jacob on his aged father, as narrated by the sacred historian, furnishes lessons which are at once admonitory and of wide application. In Jacob there was already a predisposition toward selfish and crooked ways. His besetting sin, which ought to have been opposed and uprooted, had been gratified and strengthened. He was, consequently, feeble to resist temptation, even when the deception proposed was an outrage upon the filial instincts of our nature. Jacob needed the renewing grace of God, to rectify worldliness, selfishness, and duplicity; and, instead of seeking such grace, he had fostered the carnal mind within him. Hence it was probable, that, in circumstances favourable to the temptation, Jacob would yield. Moreover, the unholy suggestion was presented by one whose

influence was, doubtless, very great. It was a mother addressing her favourite child. Appeal was made to that passion which held supreme sway within the heart of Jacob ; namely, the love of wealth. The young man must have perceived, at once, that, to deceive an aged parent, lingering on the verge of the unseen world, was an awful sin ; but important worldly advantage might be gained by the act, and a mother's voice encouraged him onward. Is it not probable, then, that the unhappy transgressor was gradually led into deeper guilt than he at first thought of ? Probably, equivocation was all that was arranged. But an absolute falsehood was soon told. One lie rendered others necessary to prevent detection. The name of Jehovah was profaned in the utterance of falsehood : " Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son ? And he said, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me." Step by step was the culprit drawn into the fatal labyrinth whose portal he ought never to have entered. It is very important distinctly to observe, that the guilty mother and her guilty son gained no real good by the disgraceful transaction. The result was, that both parties concerned had to endure much suffering. The pre-eminence of Jacob's descendants had already been decreed by Almighty God, and was not furthered in the least by the patriarch's falsehood. Soon after the commission of the sin, Jacob had to flee into a distant land ; and, instead of enjoying the comforts appertaining to his father's home, had for twenty years to endure



continual humiliation, toil, and privation. On his return, he was rendered miserable by the reproaches of conscience, the fear of his brother's wrath, and the hidings of the Divine countenance. Even after he had yielded to the renewing grace of God, and had received a new name from the Lord, indicative of a new nature, Jacob had the sorrow of witnessing, in the conduct of his sons, a repetition of his own falsehood, and of fearing lest the record of his sin might have encouraged his sons in the commission of theirs. As for Rebekah, she was left with her aged husband, and Esau, to whom she had given such cause of offence, and those "daughters of Heth," because of whom she declared, "I am weary of my life." Never again did she look on the smooth features of her favourite son, which she regarded as so beautiful; or hear the soft tones of his voice, which had been as music in her ears. They joined their hands to do evil, and were doomed to endure the punishment, far separated from each other.

The general lesson, that we ought in all circumstances to adhere to truth, is placed before us in several of the scriptural narratives; yet each narrative seems intended to present the lesson under some peculiar aspect, so that our instruction may be complete, and adapted to varying circumstances and temptations. As we read of Abraham's declaration that Sarah was his sister, while he concealed the important fact that she was his wife, we are taught the evil of equivocating when we regard ourselves as in great peril. He to whom had been given the light

of revealed truth, and who, for the general excellency of his character, would be known as the friend of God, and the father of the faithful, was, in this instance, humbled in the sight of heathens, rebuked by their king, and sent away in disgrace.—When we are told that Peter, overawed by the presence of some of his countrymen, who had recently come from Jerusalem to Antioch, withdrew himself from the society of the Gentile converts, as though he believed it to be unlawful to eat with uncircumcised ones, we learn the evil of dissembling in order to secure the favour and esteem of our fellow-men. It is apparent that, during the lifetime of those who had been circumcised before the inauguration of the Christian faith, many of the Levitical rites were retained. But to affirm that the Gentiles must be circumcised, in order to become Christians, was wrong, because such affirmation was untrue. To affirm that until Gentiles had been circumcised they were unfit to associate with Jewish believers was equally culpable, because equally untrue. Peter had been fully instructed concerning this in a heavenly vision, and by the Divine Spirit. He understood the lesson, and taught it to others. (Acts xi.) His ardent and generous spirit rejoiced in the freeness of the Gospel. He exulted to know that the Saviour whom he loved was the Saviour of the world. When he went to Antioch, he had no scruples concerning eating and drinking with Gentile believers. Had they not been equally saved by faith in the Lord Jesus? and were they not soon to reign together in heaven? But

when some metropolitan Jews arrived, who had been associated with St. James in church-fellowship, and who deemed it to be unlawful and degrading for them to hold familiar intercourse with Gentiles, Peter durst not manfully face the difficulty and maintain the right. With a cowardly spirit, he withdrew himself from his Gentile friends, most probably intending to repair the mischief at another time. Many, and among the number Barnabas, were carried away with the stream. National vanity, ancient prescription, personal distinction, would give additional power to the temptation. Paul felt that a solemn crisis had arrived, and prepared to act with fearless integrity. Had the conduct of these Jews been allowed, a system of *caste* would have been established within the Christian church; and who can tell when the mischief would have been uprooted? Paul at once boldly opposed the evil. The circumcised might retain such of their customs as were not incompatible with Christianity; for these were harmless, and would speedily die away. But here was a dogma opposed to the essential principles of the Gospel. Paul loved Peter, and Barnabas, and all his countrymen; but he loved the Saviour still more. He hastened to speak on behalf of his Master, and of the truth.

In the affecting record of Naboth's judicial murder, we see how largely the wicked may employ their own lips, and those of others, in the perpetration of evil; and in the fearful end to which both Ahab and Jezebel were brought, we are instructed that sceptre,

and crown, and royal robes, cannot shield the transgressor from retribution.—In the awful narrative concerning Ananias and Sapphira, we learn that the most sacred circumstances are insufficient to restrain the lips of those whose hearts are determinately inclined towards evil ; and, also, that it is impossible to deceive the all-wise God, or avoid the results of His displeasure.

Truthfulness is essential to right speaking ; and our words should ever be consistent with what we profess to represent. They are to be as a correct chart, which shall not allure to destruction, but guide in the track of safety.

2. *Reverence*.—In olden time, it was not uncommon for monarchs to reward their followers by giving to them grants of land. This was frequently done in England ; and a large portion of our soil is still held by families who originally acquired it in this way. Such grants were, of course, exceedingly valuable. The new proprietors were allowed to enjoy undisturbed possession of the castle, and gardens, and fields, and woods, and all things pertaining to the manor, and to use all for their own advantage. Yet did they hold the estates on certain conditions. A valuable consideration had to be given at stated times. In other cases, service had to be rendered in certain emergencies. Homage had to be rendered to the sovereign. In all cases, the lands were to be employed so that the honour and safety of the liege lord should be promoted. The fief was never intended to furnish means whereby the enemies of the royal

donor should gain advantage over him. In our own days, although the tenure of property in these realms is different, as to external circumstances, yet those who enjoy it are under obligation to refrain from any acts of hostility to the government, from rendering any aid to the enemies of the country, and to furnish help, proportionate to their means, for the defence and honour of the state.—The power of talking is as a fief held from the King of kings, the universal Lord of heaven and earth. We are permitted so to employ this gift as to derive incalculable advantage therefrom. But we are not authorized to use it in the service of any foe who is waging war against Him from whom all our blessings have come. We are required, at all times, to employ it according to His revealed will ; and, at certain periods, to offer to Him suitable tribute. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.” (Exod. xx. 7.) “The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things : who have said, With our tongue will we prevail ; our lips are our own : who is lord over us ?” (Psalm xii. 3, 4.) “I will bless the Lord at all times : His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” (Psalm xxxiv. 1.) “Take with you words, and turn to the Lord : say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously : so will we render the calves of our lips.” (Hosea xiv. 2.) “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.”

(Heb. xiii. 15.) The gift of speech is thus sacred to the glory of Him who bestowed it. Our words must be distinguished, not only by truthfulness, but by reverence also. We must have regard, not merely to the circumstances we profess to declare, but also to the relationship we sustain to the Giver of all good. The fief, whilst of immense advantage to us, must augment the glory of our Lord and gracious Benefactor.

3. *Love.* — We have all observed the influence, marvellously beneficial, of gentle showers descending during the days of spring and those of early summer. Previously the labour of the husbandman appeared to have been almost in vain, and his expectations fruitless. But as those drops, plenteous yet soft, fell all around, nature revived. Where recently flocks and herds could scarcely obtain sustenance sufficient to keep them alive, there is now abundant pasturage. Where the corn-plants seemed to have been destroyed by the keen winds, all is green and flourishing. The hard clods, which defied the utmost efforts of the labourer, have now been softened. The melody of feathered songsters is heard from every grove. We cannot but share in the general joy.—Our speech, if the expression of a loving heart, shall be “as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” Where beauty and fertility already existed, they shall be increased; and some degree of fruitfulness shall be perceived in many a spot where desolation has long prevailed. Our tones may be exceedingly various, and ought to be so; but the one

great lesson concerning the disposition of heart which ought ever to be prevalent is, "Speaking the truth in love." (Eph. iv. 15.) Our duty to our fellow-creatures "is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Rom. xiii. 9.) Love has various manifestations, according to the manifold phases of human character and circumstances. Its tones may differ widely, and yet be no less sincere and ardent. There was sorrow in the tones of Abraham, as he directed his son to prepare for their mysterious journey to that place of sacrifice which was to be shown to them; yet love towards Isaac prevailed within the heart of the patriarch. There was sadness in the tones of Jonathan, when compelled to admit that there was no safety for David near the residence of Saul; yet did Jonathan love David exceedingly. When he could do no more for him, he repaired to the wood, and there strengthened the hands of his friend by religious counsel, and by solemn appeal to God. There was rebuke in the tones of Samuel, when he refused to accompany Saul, and declared, that, because of the king's disobedience to God, he could no longer dwell with him. Yet Samuel loved Saul, and mourned for him to the day of his death. There was deepest anguish in the tones of Jeremiah, as he stood before the king of Judah, and warned him that no effort of his own, and no alliance with Egypt, could turn aside the ruin which was then impending over the entire nation. The pleasing falsehoods of the idolatrous prophets were fearlessly rebuked by the servant of

Jehovah, and the vain hopes of the monarch were unsparingly destroyed; yet Jeremiah loved his king and his countrymen. There was sternness in the Baptist's voice, as he declared to Herod his guilt and peril; yet Herod felt convinced that the preacher was seeking the true welfare of his auditors. St. Paul determinately denied the request of those who attempted to persuade him to remain with them, rather than proceed to Jerusalem, where bonds and perils awaited him; yet Paul loved those disciples. Words of true affection may not always be equally pleasing to those to whom they are addressed. Our care must be, that, whenever we employ our voice, we be "speaking the truth in love."

One form which love must frequently assume is that of forbearance. To this we are often exhorted in Holy Scripture, because its Divine Author knew that the wickedness and unreasonableness of those around us would render it needful. "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." (Prov. xv. 1.) "By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone." (Prov. xxv. 15.) "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. v. 44.) It sometimes happens that those who are right in their opinions, are wrong in their tempers, and even manifest more ill-feeling than those who are in error. Thus it was with the men of Judah in the dispute which arose concerning the bringing back



of David after the rebellion of Absalom had been suppressed. If our opinions are correct, and we can maintain kindly feeling, and use gentle words, it is very likely we shall bring over our opponents to our views. After the conquest of Canaan in the days of Joshua, the two tribes and a half which had received their portion on the eastern side of the Jordan, returned to their possessions. It was rumoured that they had erected an altar near the passage of the river. The other tribes assumed that this act was a manifestation of treason against the commonwealth, and of rebellion against Jehovah; and they hastened after the supposed offenders, eager to avenge the wrong. Had the men who erected the altar replied, "We will build what we please, and where we please. What have you to do with the matter? Have we not endangered our lives for a land we are never to possess, whilst you never had to leave your path for our sakes? Is it not enough that you have so many advantages, without assuming lordship over us?" it is probable that a fierce conflict would have ensued. But, happily, a few kind words were uttered, and all was peacefully settled. Several instances are given in Holy Scripture, in which the most lamentable results followed the utterance of angry words: such as the peremptory message of the other tribes to that of Benjamin; (Judges xx.) Gideon and the men of Ephraim; (Judges viii. 1;) Jephthah and the men of Ephraim. (Judges xii. 1.) Doubtless there are circumstances in which it is our duty to rebuke and resist the unjust encroachments

of wicked men ; as when Paul claimed his political rights from the magistrates at Philippi. But we must not eagerly contend for trifles, nor allow bitterness of spirit to be manifested when seeking to maintain our own in matters which are important.

4. *Wisdom*.—We have occasionally seen a rude imitation of a bank-note which had never been intended to deceive. It was simply of no value. In the first instance, the intention was, perhaps, that a few handbills scattered in some shop-window should attract the attention of passers by. Afterwards the engravings served to amuse the children into whose hands they happened to fall. It would scarcely be possible to prove that any harm was done. But for any of them to be accepted, as an equivalent for valuable commodities, was altogether out of question. They were harmless, but worthless.—Now, it so happens, that too much of the conversation around us is of this sort. No deception is intended, but no benefit is conferred. We do not, after spending a few hours amid such talk, feel as merchants who have been mutually enriched by interchanges which have taken place, but as children who have been idly spending their time. As relaxation such talk may not be always unlawful ; but, certainly, it ought to be confined within narrow limits. In numberless instances, if we can but speak the right word at the right time, it will prove of inestimable advantage to those who hear it ; and on other occasions we need to seek such counsel from others. “The tongue of the wise is health.” (Prov. xii. 18.) “The words of a

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wise man's mouth are gracious." (Eccles. x. 12.) Of what immense value was the sage counsel given to Rehoboam by the old men who had stood near his father's throne! And how the youthful king would have gained, had he been prudent enough to take it! In matters pertaining to salvation, words of wisdom are of still greater importance. No bank-note, though duly prepared and properly issued from the Bank of England, ever represented so much of true wealth as has been sometimes conveyed to an anxious inquirer, during the crisis of his spiritual history, by means of words wisely selected, and graciously applied by the Holy Ghost. The Bank of England does occasionally issue notes, any one of which would be a life-fortune to a labouring man; but the words of heavenly wisdom, whereby men may be saved, enrich us for ever and ever. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another." (Col. iii. 16.)

5. *Purity*.—The value of a river or streamlet largely depends on the purity of its water. At the time Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire, there was a stream near the famous city of Jericho, which, in consequence of some deleterious ingredient, was the occasion of mischief rather than of benefit. Those were injured who drank of the water; and even the fields, near which it flowed, were rendered less fruitful. When Elisha, who had recently been acknowledged as the successor of Elijah, was in the neighbourhood of Jericho, application was made to him on this matter. "And

the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren."—There are, alas! many persons who are frequently manifesting the pollution of their hearts, so as to imperil those around them. Their conversation, sometimes wilfully, and at other times inadvertently, is highly injurious. Especially are their words the occasion of danger to the youthful and the inexperienced. When exposed to peril of this sort, Samson, though the highly-honoured champion of Israel, most ingloriously fell. In similar circumstances, Joseph, by Divine grace, happily triumphed. When we are unavoidably detained in the company of ungodly persons, we shall do well to bear in mind the teachings of Holy Scripture. "The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: to keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman." (Prov. vi. 23, 24.) But it must be our prayerful and constant aim that our own words shall be like the pure and fertilizing stream. Divine power could rectify what was wrong in the water at Jericho. The prophet said, "Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." In like manner, Almighty God offers to impart unto us that renewing grace which shall rectify our nature, whence our

conduct derives its character, whether good or evil. Then shall the streams be pure, when a Divine energy has been applied to "the spring of the waters." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it 'may minister grace unto the hearers.'" (Eph. iv. 29.)

6. *Caution.*—We do not entrust edged tools to infants. Of course we do not suppose that they would, with malicious intent, employ them for our injury. Our fear is, that, from want of caution, they would hurt themselves and others. When, in consequence of their growing years, and our need of their aid in some of the tasks of life, we place sharp instruments in the hands of young persons, we give directions concerning their careful employment. We still feel some dread, lest, even now, the useful but dangerous tools should, through heedlessness, be the means of doing harm.—Almighty God, in the gift of speech, has bestowed upon us an instrument of the mind, which is highly calculated to promote our happiness and our usefulness. But it is an instrument by which even the heedless may do much harm. Hence the Lord has taught us the need of caution in its use. Much of the mischief inflicted by means of the tongue is the result of mere thoughtlessness. When, with the intention of injuring our neighbour, and effecting some selfish purpose of our own, we affirm what is disparaging of him, our conduct is directly opposed to the law of love. If our statements are not well-founded, we are trampling on the law of

truth, as well as on that of love. But when the characters of others are injured by us from mere heedlessness, hastiness or an undue fondness for talking, we still manifest a most culpable want of caution. Many persons, on the whole well disposed, have great reason to ponder the instructions of Holy Scripture concerning the mischiefs unintentionally inflicted by the tongue. They are, perhaps, in special danger, because, notwithstanding their persistent loquaciousness and frequent blunders, they are not conscious of the least desire to injure any person. They resemble a child to whom a knife has been given, who cuts here, and hacks there, and wounds yonder, yet really means no harm. "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." (Psalm xv. 1, 3.) "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth." (Prov. xxvi. 20.)

7. *Courtesy*.—The copper and bronze coinage of these realms is certainly not so valuable as the golden; yet we could not well do without it. Three-penny and fourpenny pieces are not prized like bank-notes, yet these diminutive specimens of coined silver must not be despised. Small change is, on numberless occasions, exceedingly useful. Those who have none often incur serious disadvantages.—Now, in the world of speech, courteous words are the "small change" which we employ. We are directed

in Holy Scripture to use this coinage, of lower denomination, but of real worth. The same authority which has said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," has also taught us, "Be courteous."—Though the sacred records were completed many ages before the dawn of this much-lauded nineteenth century, they furnish many beautiful examples of courtesy. We may learn from the language employed by the patriarch Abraham and Ephron the Hittite, when engaged concerning the purchase and sale of a field in Machpelah, how, in this respect, to conduct our commercial transactions. (Gen. xxiii.) Some of our corn-markets, and horse-fairs, and other places of business, do not fully come up to the model set by these men in olden time. We are not told the name of the stranger who observed the perplexity of Joseph, when the youth had found his way from Hebron to Shechem in search of his brethren, and then discovered that they had gone whither he knew not. But this "certain man," whoever he was, evidently had a kindly heart, and endeavoured to assist the lad. (Gen. xxxvii. 15.) I am not sure that we should always find an equal amount of sympathy and aid, either in the crowded thoroughfares of London, or the solitudes of Cumberland. We may learn how to treat our dependents courteously, from the salutation given by the wealthy farmer Boaz to his harvestmen; and how to yield a manly respect to our employers, by the return made by these sons of toil; (Ruth ii. ;) and how to manifest affection to friends, by the conduct of Jonathan and

David; (1 Sam. xviii. 4;) and how to cherish the amenities of life, by many other passages of Holy Scripture. In those remote ages the famous dictum, "The schoolmaster is abroad," had not been heard; but some had learned to yield a kindly respect to their fellows, and to employ suitably the small change of the lips.

8. *Courage*.—Such sounds as the war-trumpet utters are appropriate for those who are about to engage in the battle-field. Even the brave-hearted need such stimulus and encouragement. The soul of the warrior would be depressed, if, in such circumstances, he had long to listen to the timid suggestions of some trembling coward, or the mournful cadences of a funeral dirge. Some spirit-stirring and defiant air will most effectually nerve his soul to acquit himself heroically in that hour of mortal conflict.—Believers in Christ are often engaged in a painful struggle against evil. They are assailed by temptations from within and from without. They need that words full of confidence in the Divine Captain of our salvation, and expressive of a living hope concerning the glorious and endless reward, should be addressed to them. We are thankful that such words have cheered our souls in many a time of peril; and we must endeavour that our lips convey similar aid to any who may be hard pressed by the foe in our vicinity. So shall Christ's militant host triumph, and we shall be more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. Such words were addressed to the Israelites, when most of the spies



discouraged their brethren. "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it." (Num. xiii. 30.) Such words were addressed by St. Paul to Timothy, to believers at Philippi, and to others, when the apostle was anticipating a speedy martyrdom. Amid our lesser trials, let us encourage each other, until the conflict is over.

9. *Thankfulness.* — Bright sunshine makes some scenery appear enchanting. When, from some eminence, we look on fruitful vales bounded in the far distance by lofty mountains, and on the noble river winding along amid flowery meadows, and by overshadowing forests; and on countless flocks and herds, finding, in rich pasturage and the clear stream, all the delight of which they are capable; and, perchance, obtaining, through some opening in the hills, a glimpse of ocean, and white sails, and projecting headlands; we feel that whilst that glorious light rests now on one, and then on another, portion of the scenery, we shall never be wearied of gazing. Even the streets of London and Manchester appear inviting when the sunshine visits them; and those alleys into which Christian philanthropists penetrate, and over which railway-travellers are sometimes hurried when near the terminus of their journey, appear endurable so long as they are so illumined.—Thankfulness is the sunshine of the soul. By its expression in grateful words, our joys may occasionally be fanned into rapture, and our pleasant places become a very Paradise on earth. By such employment of speech

our sorrows may be alleviated, and our path rendered cheerful. Such employment of our lips will be pleasing to Almighty God. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High." (Psalm xcii. 1.) "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (Psalm xxxiv. 1.) "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness: to the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever." (Psalm xxx. 11, 12.) Let us do our utmost that sunshine may stream around our own dwellings, and those of our neighbours.

10. *Spirituality*.—The captive Jews of Babylon regarded their harps as sacred. They had been consecrated to the service of their God and their country, and they must not be used in meaner tasks. If they were not allowed to utter strains of true devotion and fervent loyalty, they should be silent. The captives hung their harps on the willows, and refused to employ them for the mere amusement of victorious foes.—The people of God are now as exiles in an enemy's land. Our voice is to be regarded as sacred, consecrated to the service of our God, and for the music of our distant fatherland. We dare not employ the precious gift merely to please those who are at enmity with its great Author. If any will listen, we may thankfully declare, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief." (1 Tim. i. 15.) If we discern any desire toward Israel and Israel's God, we are authorized to encourage it by the invitation, " We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you : come thou with us, and we will do thee good : for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." (Num. x. 29.) We are to endeavour, as fellow-pilgrims, to confirm each other's determination to reach the holy city, and enjoy the smile of its King : " They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." (Jer. l. 5.) We are frequently to converse respecting the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, the triumphs and conflicts, belonging to the pilgrim's life ; and are assured that Zion's King marks and approves such use of our lips : " Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another : and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels ; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Mal. iii. 16, 17.)

## CHAPTER III.

## THE PERFECT MODEL OF SPEECH.

"THE officers answered, Never man spake like this Man." (John vii. 46.) "Leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." (1 Peter ii. 21.)

"In a dark night, if an *ignis fatuus* do but precede us, the glaring of its lesser flames does so amuse our eyes, that we follow it into rivers and precipices, as if the way of that false light were designed on purpose to be our path to tread in : and therefore not to follow the glories of the Sun of Righteousness, who, indeed, leads us over rocks and difficult places, but secures us against the danger, and guides us into safety, is both the greatest indecency and unthankfulness in the world."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

BIOGRAPHY is a power. Instruction thus presented is pre-eminently attractive. Most persons find that their attention is easily drawn to the contemplation of any scene where human conduct and passion are depicted. In the Art-Exhibition, at Manchester, the largest crowd might generally be seen around the picture of "The Three Marys," and "The Death of Chatterton," and others which strongly appealed to our universal interest in what belongs to human life, with its joys or agonies. Besides, instruction thus presented, is specially definite. "Show me how to do it," is the wish of all learners. The juvenile musician needs not only to be told in what way the instrument is to be employed, but also to look on whilst a skilful

player calls forth the stream of sweet and harmonious sounds. Parisian French is never acquired by us from any manuals, however cleverly compiled. Those who have excelled in painting and sculpture have, generally, sat for months or years at the feet of some great master, and carefully observed how he transferred to marble, or to the canvas, the glorious ideas formed within his mind, or the images of beauty furnished by nature. Above all, that which gives to biography its power for good or evil is, that instruction thus furnished is most influential. Man is an imitative creature. We have all been copyists. To some extent, and generally to a large extent, we remain copyists to the close of life. The feats of old Homer's heroes, the exploits of Grecian and Trojan warriors as sung by Virgil, the world-wide conquests of Alexander, the autobiography of Julius Cæsar, the intrepid deeds of Hannibal, and other acts recorded in ancient history, have left a deep impression on modern times. The writings of ancient philosophers have not been so powerful as the recorded deeds of ancient warriors and other men of renown. Memoirs of men who have lived within the last century or two are at the present time largely moulding the characters of many, especially of the youthful. Such records are more suitable than some of older date, because the paths they point to are still open. For weal or woe, these biographies exercise a vast influence. Some of them make known the doings of philanthropists, who, in high stations or low, with large opportunities or limited, sought to

glorify their God in promoting the true welfare of their fellow-creatures. Other biographical pages inform us concerning selfish men, who, in varied manner, strove to make everything yield to their own unworthy designs. Both classes exercise a powerful influence. The character of those who read is largely moulded thereby, though sometimes almost imperceptibly.

The best biography is a gracious power. The Life of Christ, as recorded by the four inspired evangelists, has done much to elevate the character of myriads, and is destined yet to exert a far mightier and wider-spread influence. Our blessed Redeemer is also our great Exemplar. The work for which He came from heaven was, undoubtedly, to offer a sacrifice for the sins of our guilty race. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Whilst, however, He is our great High Priest,—and the New Testament chiefly represents Him as such,—He is also presented to us in other relations. We would never lose sight of the Cross. But it is also our privilege to regard attentively our Divine Pattern. We needed, in truth, much more than a model. It would have availed us little to be shown how we also ought to walk, whilst we were shut up in the dungeon of sin, prisoners in the horrible pit and the miry clay. No example, however perfect, could have availed, whilst guilt remained unforgiven, and pollution unremoved. But, whilst we

glory in the cross of Christ, and seek salvation through that blood which cleanseth from all sin, we are thankful for the example left us by our adorable Redeemer. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John ii. 6.) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. ii. 5.) We must not be unmindful of His words who loved us unto death : "Learn of Me." (Matt. xi. 29.) "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John xiii. 15.)

It is quite true, that discrimination is necessary when we attempt to imitate our blessed Lord. It is not every act, becoming in Cæsar, which may be imitated by Cæsar's attendants. But in the imitation of Jesus, the humble and sincere disciple will find few difficulties of a practical nature. As a Divine Person, as the great Teacher of our world, and as the anointed Redeemer of our race, He must, certainly, often speak and act in a manner widely different from what would be suitable for us. But we do not find anything here which need lead sincere souls astray. Notwithstanding the infinite superiority of His nature to ours, and the great disparity between His offices and our dependence, we read, "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." For the most part He trod where they would have to tread ; acting as they should act, and speaking as it would be suitable for them to speak. Important lessons may be learnt more fully from the contemplation of a perfect Model, than from listening

to mere precept. We learn where and how to tread, although our path conducts not across the stormy sea, nor to the splendours of the Mount of Transfiguration, nor to the awful darkness of Calvary. We learn from the Lord Jesus how to act, although we should but manifest our impotence were we to attempt the healing of the sick, and the raising of the dead, and must not pronounce words of doom on the barren tree, nor drive those who are notoriously worldly from the sanctuary of God. In like manner, we may readily discern in what instances His essential divinity, or solemn offices, place His words far above our imitation; and yet, from the manner in which He was generally accustomed to speak, we may learn how to speak. As the universal Creator and Proprietor, He addresses His disciples: "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." "I and my Father are one." As the omniscient God, He foretells future events concerning Himself, the disciples, Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, and concerning the closing scenes of the world's history. As the Head of the church, He imposes the conditions of discipleship, and gives authority to His servants without referring to any higher power than His own. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." As the Searcher of hearts, He applies truth,



without any hesitation, to individual cases: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" "The hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table." In all this, however, there is little practical difficulty. No person of sincere, earnest, and prayerful mind will be at a loss to know when the conduct of the Saviour is imitable, and when it is otherwise. We can but just indicate the kind of aid to be derived from a due contemplation of the life of Christ. As Sir Isaac Newton discerned more fully than others that in astronomy, mathematics, and the kindred sciences, there are illimitable fields of knowledge, stretching on every side, which his feet had not trodden, nor would be permitted to tread, during this present life; so those eminent saints of God who have devoutly and practically studied the recorded words and acts of their Lord, more than their companions, have, more than they, felt that they had but gathered a little fruit from the border-land most readily accessible, whilst the full harvest and vintage of regions beyond were untouched. Dr. Trench, in one of his Hulsean lectures, entitled, "The Inexhaustibility of Scripture," writes thus: "It is part of this absence of system, with the presence in its stead of a higher method,—of this constitution of Scripture as a book which no man should ever search to the end, and then be tempted to lay aside as known and finished, with every part of it inventoried and catalogued,—that so much of it should be occupied with the history of lives. That which is to teach

us to live, is itself life; not precepts, not rules alone, but these clothing themselves in the flesh and blood of action and of suffering. A system of faith and duty, however intricate, one might come to the end of at last. One might possess thoroughly a *Summa Theologia*, however massive and piled up; for after all, however vast, it yet has its defined bounds and limits. But life stretches out on every side, and on every side loses itself in the infinite. An Abraham, a David, a Paul,—there is always something incomplete in the way in which we have hitherto realized their characters; they always abide greater than our conceptions of them, and at the same time always ready to reveal themselves in some new features to the loving and studious eye. Beheld in some new combination, in some new grouping with those by whom they are surrounded, they will yield some lesson of instruction which they have never yielded before. And if they will do so, how much more HE whom we are bidden above all to consider, looking unto whom we are to run our course, and whose every turn, and gesture, and tone, and word, are significant for us! We might study out a system; but how can we ever study out a person? And our blessedness is, that Christ does not declare to us a system, and say, ‘This is the truth;’ so doing, He might have established a school: but He points to a person, even to Himself, and says, ‘I am the Truth;’ and thus He founded, not a school, but a church; a fellowship, which stands in its faith upon a person, not in its tenure of a

doctrine, or, at least, only mediately, and in a secondary sense upon this." We will endeavour rapidly to point toward some of the fields where heavenly treasure may be obtained.

1. *The Lord Jesus acquiring Divine knowledge.*—We are not largely informed concerning the early life of the Saviour. There is, however, one important circumstance furnished. We read: "And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him. Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers." (Luke ii. 40—47.) We would not willingly lose the instruction intended for us in this instance. Eighteen years pass away before any further record is made concerning the words of the Lord Jesus. We would reverently inquire the reason why this one day's converse should be preserved. There is, undoubtedly,

much that we cannot fully comprehend in the scene then presented in the temple courts. The union of the Divine and human natures in the Person of our Redeemer must occasion mysteries which we cannot explain. We must be content to accept that which is plainly revealed, and thankful for the important practical lessons thus taught. Thus all good students of external nature act. There is no science which presents not mysteries. Those scholars who know most, discern most clearly the limits of their knowledge. Yet they hold fast the truth which has been allotted to them. Now, we learn from Holy Scripture, that the knowledge of our Divine Redeemer is illimitable; and yet we read, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." We pause not to attempt further explanation. We rather accept the lesson here presented. Eighteen years before the voice of the Lord Jesus is heard crying, "Repent, and believe the Gospel," it is heard asking questions concerning the law of Jehovah from the public teachers of that law. He is presented to our view as a learner. Here is a desire for truth, a desire for Divine truth; a desire which led Him to the house of God; a desire which caused Him to be found seated at the feet of those who were the authorized expounders of that law. We read, also, of "His understanding and answers" as the occasion of admiring surprise. Already "the Child Jesus" discerned a depth and spirituality in the Divine law which was unseen by the worldly-minded, however learned. But He was there as a learner. His voice

was employed inquiring after truth, and the result was that He "increased in wisdom." Those are declared to be blessed who are seated at wisdom's gates. "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding ; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures ; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." (Prov. ii. 3—5.) "Thus saith the Lord : Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. vi. 16.)—We have to ask questions concerning Divine truth which the Lord Jesus never had to ask. We comprehend not all concerning Him ; but thus much we do fully know, that He was without sin. He never had to inquire, "What must I do to be saved?" We must all begin with that inquiry. In order that the awakened sinner may find entrance at the strait gate, it is generally needful that he should seek information from those who have entered before him. Some, doubtless, who have not been favoured with the opportunity of personal intercourse with God's people, have found that the written word, when applied by the Divine Spirit, furnished all needful direction. Not so, perhaps, many who wished to travel alone, and be dependent on none of their fellow-pilgrims. Ask questions concerning eternal life. Before you have entered the wicket-gate, as you are entering, after you have entered, ask questions concerning the way to the Celestial City. If we are faithful, the Lord may so bless us, that, in

some humble measure, the understanding He imparts, and the answers He enables us to give, may be of service to others. But never be too proud to ask questions of those who are experimentally acquainted with Divine things. Especially from aged believers, who are ripe for heaven, whether rich or poor, learned or illiterate, inquire concerning the deep things of God. Learn something from the great mystery, the Child Jesus in the temple of God, as a learner, and increasing "in wisdom, and in favour with God and man."

2. *The Lord Jesus sorely tempted.*—In the ordeal through which our Lord was called to pass, immediately after He had been solemnly announced as the Divine Messiah, we find mystery and instruction once more blended. We read in St. Luke's account, "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil." From the language employed by St. Matthew, we gather that a powerful and Divine influence rested upon the mind of the Saviour, urging Him to the scene of conflict. Are we to learn from this, that there was a natural and innocent aversion from so painful an ordeal, but a Divine conviction of its importance triumphing over the aversion? Other occasions, in which the Redeemer's words were employed to defeat the tempter, we cannot find space to mention; but three circumstances, belonging to the triumph in the wilderness, must be briefly indicated. *First*: The words employed by the Lord Jesus were ex-

pressive of His determination to please His Heavenly Father. The temptations were real and powerful. He "suffered, being tempted." No doubt, supernatural aid was afforded to sustain His life during the forty days. "When they were ended, He afterward hungered." He was tested as those are who are starving in the midst of abundance; for He could at once have supplied His need. To secure universal dominion at once, that it might be employed for good, is what a generous mind might well regard as attractive; and to prove the rectitude of our conduct, and the justness of our claims, is what the best of men have been tempted hastily to accomplish. But, though He "suffered, being tempted," there was not a moment's hesitancy. Each fiery dart was at once repelled. *Secondly*: The words employed by the Lord Jesus constantly appealed to the Holy Scriptures. "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written." Why, those Scriptures had been given to His people by the Son of God. They had proceeded from His own mind, and had been furnished by Him to His servants, whom He inspired. But for the present, the Divine Lord of all stood among the servants. He was "made like unto His brethren." It was His good pleasure not only to triumph, but to do so by employing no other weapons than those which are provided for all who repair to the armoury of God. The sword of omnipotence would speedily have driven the tempter to the abyss; but the Lord Jesus preferred to employ "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." As, concerning the

sword of Goliath, David, when in the sacerdotal city of Nob, said, "There is none like that; give it me,"—so we are taught to say respecting the word of God, as we mark how the cruel foe was repeatedly repulsed whilst the Saviour said, "It is written." *Thirdly*: The words employed by the Lord Jesus manifested a complete acquaintance with the sacred Oracles. Eighteen years before that sore conflict occurred, when the Child Jesus was asking questions, and earnestly striving to acquire information, the object of study was the law Divine, and the result was an increase of heavenly wisdom. He now entered the arena, furnished with weapons of celestial power. To each temptation He had a reply, drawn from the same storehouse: and, when the old deceiver, attempting as in Paradise to wrest the words of the Most High from their real meaning, urged home the temptation to manifest His dignity by casting Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, with a quotation from the ninety-first Psalm, partial and distorted, the Saviour at once discerned the sophistry. True, it was written, "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." But to cast Himself headlong from the pinnacle, at the suggestion of the bad spirit, was no part of the "ways" marked out by Divine Providence.—Men sometimes wrest the Scriptures in the attempt to justify themselves in wrong doing. We have need to stand on our guard. Happy, if the word of God dwell in us richly. If we are mighty in the Scriptures, a reply to the suggestions of the adversary will always be found before we are over-



come. So shall we conquer by "the sword of the Spirit," and the vanquished foe shall depart from us.

3. *The Lord Jesus imparting instruction.*—In our attempts to teach we occupy a position far beneath that which rightly belonged to Him. The Great Teacher imparted to all around, from the infinite resources of His own wisdom; we have to draw from the treasury of His scriptures. The light of truth, in all its fulness, dwelt in Him; whilst we can, at best, only reflect a few feeble rays derived from Him. He is "the Sun of Righteousness;" but the most exalted of His servants are honoured when spoken of as "stars" held in the right hand of the Divine Saviour. His authority was inherent in Himself; ours depends on the agreement of our words with the written revelation of His mind and will. He knew what was in man, and could therefore unerringly apply general truths to individual cases. We can search no heart, and can judge of character only by outward manifestations, so that we must seldom pronounce with certainty. Yet may the servants learn something from their Lord. They speak in His name; endeavour to utter the same message; address similar hearers; are opposed by similar enemies; and are hoping for similar success. We may, then, ask, In what manner did the Great Teacher speak the Gospel word?

The Saviour's ministry was characterized by uncompromising *fidelity*. It is possible to manifest that which shall pass, with some, for faithfulness, whilst it is not calculated to probe the conscience of any

sinner, and does not expose the speaker to any risk of losing the favour of those whom he addresses. Our sympathies may be so appealed to, that tears flow plentifully, and yet no idol is so much as exposed. Denunciation of sin in general may be uttered with the grandeur of mimic thunder, and yet no sleeper be aroused. Personal iniquity may be pointed out and reproved, yet care be taken that the offenders be far distant; as when some 'popularity-hunter' denounces the rich as guilty of oppression, profligacy, selfishness, pride, and all manner of sin, when there are present none who own ten pounds, though some of them may have wasted ample wages. On the other hand, there have been those who, as though paragons of virtue themselves, and wrathful against transgressors in proportion to their own immaculate rectitude, appeared intent on terrifying, taunting, vexing their hearers, rather than speaking, with humbled and tender hearts, of an awful peril to which they were themselves once exposed, and of a great salvation of which they have been permitted to partake. The Sermon on the Mount presents a model of fidelity, and the same characteristic may be traced everywhere throughout our Lord's public teaching. The truth is brought close home to our own hearts, without harshness, but with the utmost faithfulness.—The Saviour's ministry was characterized by unrivalled *tenderness*. We read: "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few ; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." (Matt. ix. 36—38.) The Saviour's unutterable compassion for those who were ready to perish, oppressed alike by sin and misery, was the occasion of that tenderness which was ever blended with His fidelity. How strikingly was the austerity of Simon the Pharisee rebuked by the gentleness of the Saviour's words and conduct ! (Luke vii. 36—50.) The Lord Jesus hated sin more than Simon did. The Pharisee's deliverance from its bondage was very questionable, whilst no taint of evil had ever been found in the Son of God. As it had been declared concerning the Messiah, He was to be "cut off" "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." But He greatly prized the souls for whom He was about to die. Earnestly did He desire that these might be fully purified, and thus prepared to dwell with Him in endless blessedness. Meanwhile it was His joy to encourage the return of the trembling penitent, and to say to the contrite and believing one, "Thy sins are forgiven."—The Saviour's ministry was characterized by untiring *earnestness*. A striking instance occurred at Jacob's well, near to Sychar, a city of the Samaritans. No ordinary Jewish teacher, though zealous to make proselytes, would have employed his strength, on such an occasion, in teaching that woman the right way. It was very evident that she

was fully imbued with the prejudices of her race. The Teacher was wearied by a lengthened journey, performed on foot. The sun was now in the meridian, and the heat must have been oppressive. The conduct of the woman had been exceedingly wicked. When she was first addressed by our Lord, she manifested a worldliness and volubility which rendered success very unlikely. But the blessed Saviour was an example of that earnest desire for the salvation of the perishing, which He afterwards depicted by saying, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing." Very instructive is the reply He gave, at the well of Sychar, to His wondering disciples: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."—The Saviour's ministry was characterized by a frequent *appeal to ancient Scripture*. As Divine, He had an indisputable right to speak by His own authority, and without appending to His teaching any external sanction. This right on some occasions He claimed and exercised. He placed His own "*I say unto you*" above all the traditions and dogmas of men, and side by side with the ancient "*Thus saith the Lord*." His Divinity secured such right to Him, and His works made it manifest. Yet do we find the Saviour constantly appealing to those sacred writings which the Jews possessed. In the early part of His public labours we hear Him saying, "Search the Scriptures;

for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of Me." All the way through His course we observe the same regard to the ancient revelation. After His resurrection, He inquired of those who ought to have been further advanced in Divine truth than they were, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." The Son of God thus placed His own seal afresh on the books then regarded by the Jewish Church as canonical. He thus secured for Himself a hearing from some whose bigotry would otherwise have closed their ears. He thus shed abundant light on the Scriptures, and disclosed the harmony existing between the dispensation of symbols and that of unveiled realities. By employing the alphabet and lessons already familiar, He more readily taught enlarged truth to the sincere inquirer. But did not the Great Teacher also intend, by this proceeding, to furnish an example to those who would afterwards be required to instruct their fellows, yet possessing no inherent knowledge or authority? Preachers and hearers are thus led to act as the noble-minded Bereans acted.—The Saviour's ministry was characterized by remarkable *perspicuity*. We read that "the common people heard Him gladly." In our own days, whilst men of mighty intellect declare that in the words of the Lord Jesus, as in Scripture generally, there are depths of wisdom so profound that those who diligently explore them

may ever be acquiring fresh stores of treasure, the little children prefer the words of the Lord Jesus to those of writers who professedly prepare books for the young. The words of the Lord Jesus, beyond those of any secular writer, are capable of ready translation into the various languages of the earth; and they have found a ready reception from men but partially reclaimed from barbarism. The adaptation of His teaching to the sage and to the infant arises, in part, from the beautiful simplicity of the words employed, and, in part, from the nature and abundance of the illustration selected. This is apparent even when the words have been translated into widely-different language. Anyone may trace both these elements of universal adaptation, by a careful study of any of our Lord's parables; as, for instance, that of the Prodigal Son. After He was glorified He communicated to His apostles a fulness of truth, which had, until then, been reserved; and this we are bound, so far as we are able, to make known. In other respects, the Lord Jesus is, to all His servants who endeavour to manifest the truth, an incomparable Model.

4. *The Lord Jesus undergoing unparalleled suffering.*—We select as an example the anguish endured in the Garden of Gethsemane, during the hours immediately before His betrayal. Long before that awful night, He had greatly suffered. His sojourn on earth was one of privation, and endurance, and pain. He uttered no idle complaint when He declared, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests,

but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The cruel adversary, who was so signally defeated in the wilderness, departed from Him at that time, but only "for a season." On other occasions he renewed the strife; and, though still defeated, he continued to harass the mind, and to bruise the heel, of the Victor. Frequently, during the public labours of our Lord, did He anticipate the period of His latest sufferings; and all the detail of those agonies was foreseen by Him. It seems that He spoke not largely concerning His latest woes until the hour was approaching, and then only to prepare the minds of the disciples for the trials to which they would be consequently exposed. But the disclosure which He then made instructs us that the terrors surrounding the Garden, the Judgment-Hall, the Cross, and the Sepulchre, had ever been foreseen by Him. At length the period when He was to be offered up arrived. Withdrawn from His disciples, He entered on that mysterious agony which immediately preceded His arrest and condemnation. There is here, also, much which we do not fully comprehend. Thus far no violence is employed by any visible foe. It is midnight. The Sufferer is in the open air, and bowed on the cold earth. Yet we read, "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Most likely, demons were there endeavouring to terrify the Redeemer, and drive Him from His purpose. But we are especially reminded that it is written, "It pleased the Lord to

bruise Him : He hath put Him to grief." "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Still, the suffering Saviour now appears, in a very special manner, as the Exemplar to His suffering people. Three years before, He had taught His disciples to say, when addressing their heavenly Father, "Thy will be done." Now, in the hour of His deepest anguish, He employs those very words. The sentence, which, in the future, is to be uttered by myriads of His followers, as they successively pass through the furnace, is to be rendered sacred by the lips of the Divine Man as He passes through the scorching flame. These words would be treasured by the faithful, because they were given to disciples who asked that they might be taught to pray. But they would be prized the more in consequence of their employment when their Lord was in agony, and about to die for human sin. Henceforth, in every subsequent age, these words would be uttered by suffering saints amid their various trials : they would be pronounced in the solitary chamber, and amid the great congregation ; by those possessing wealth, yet proving its insufficiency to heal the torturing wound, and by those whose other troubles would be aggravated by pinching poverty ; by the bereaved mother, gazing on the lifeless form of her darling babe, and by the orphan girl leaving the grave-side where now both her parents sleep until the last trumpet shall disturb their slumbers ; by the martyr on his way to the stake, or scaffold, or rack, and by the feeble as



they nerve themselves to struggle for bread amid unsympathising strangers. As these words, Divinely taught, should thus be uttered by multitudes striving to yield themselves to God, a gracious power should be imparted. Thus it has been, age after age, and will be to the close of time. As elsewhere the footsteps of the Redeemer may be seen by His followers, so here also such guidance and encouragement are afforded. The Saviour is in great distress. There is within Him the instinctive and innocent desire to be delivered from severe suffering. This desire is expressed in prayer, fully, and earnestly, and importunately. But there is also the expression of resignation, and in the words our lips are taught to employ: "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, *Thy will be done.*"

5. *The Lord Jesus surrounded by the ungodly.*—Under all circumstances He maintained the truth. Divine truth was to be more fully revealed, and was thenceforth to triumph over the falsehood by which Satan gained empire in our world ; that truth was to extend its conquests, until the whole earth should be filled with light and purity, with love and gladness. It was, however, directly opposed to the evil passions of the carnal mind. Hence even the benevolent miracles of the Saviour could only secure for Him the esteem of a few. Too many hated the light, and turned away from the light, because their deeds were evil. Many of these speedily began to plot against the life of their Reprover. Until the Saviour's prior

task had been accomplished, He adopted such measures as frustrated the murderous designs of these wicked men. Sometimes He withdrew from them. At other times, by His wise replies, He disappointed their malice and craft. They inquired concerning the source of His authority. It seemed likely that in His reply there would be something which might seem opposed to the ecclesiastical law of the Jews, or to the political supremacy of the Romans. The reply, however, consisted of a question by which they were sorely perplexed, followed by a parable in which they were faithfully reprovèd. So, when those spies came to Him pretending to be disturbed in conscience respecting the payment of tribute: "If he declare it to be lawful, his popularity with all patriots will be destroyed. If he affirm such payment to be unlawful, we will inform against him as a traitor to Cæsar." But again the snare was avoided. On these and similar occasions, the Lord Jesus was not striving to avoid suffering on behalf of the truth. He was rather arranging that the truth should be more fully known. When the hour drew near in which the Great Sacrifice was to be offered, He uttered and applied the words Divine with special directness and power. He did not falter because He saw that His enemies were exasperated. Such teaching produced a twofold result. Many, doubtless, obtained clearer views, and deeper impressions, and holier resolutions. The rage of Christ's inveterate foes knew no bounds. The death of the Reprover must be compassed. The blind, and lame, and

leprous, and all sick folk, must be left in their wretchedness. If the multitude could not be so led as to forsake the Great Healer, their displeasure must be braved. Whatever the consequences, those lips must be silenced. Then came the crisis. Impotent rage, which fretted itself in vain during the long night of the Saviour's arrest, was succeeded in the morning by determined effort to intimidate the Roman governor. Pilate must be driven to a deed of murder from which, heathen as he was, he recoiled. The fate of the Prisoner now hung in the balance. All seemed to depend on the will of that heathen governor. Though the Jewish priests and rulers furiously clamoured around him, Pilate could yet say to Jesus, "Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" According to human probability, a few words of well-directed flattery, addressed to Pilate, would have secured a release. Pilate's judgment was already enlisted in the Prisoner's favour: the message from his wife had strengthened his conviction, and the washing of his hands had proclaimed it. He desired not to doom Him to death, against whom no crime was proved, and of whom so much was affirmed that was wondrous, benevolent, god-like. Could not the Accused consent to abjure his pretensions? Would He not do it for a time, until this storm should blow over? Would He not modify them somewhat? Would He not, at any rate, make a little concession, if only in mere form? Could nothing be done? The lips of that accused One

open, but not in order to save His life by denying or distorting the truth. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Surrounded as we often are by ungodly men, we have reason to learn from our Lord how to manifest unshrinking fidelity and heavenly wisdom in all our intercourse with them.

6. *There are various other aspects under which we might profitably contemplate the words of the Lord Jesus, as the perfect Model of speech.*—As we, with adoring love and wondering awe, trace His footsteps, we observe Him bestowing comfort on the sorrowful; and, although we cannot utter such words of power as those which gave sight to Bartimeus, and restored to the weeping father his child in soundness of body and mind, and recalled Lazarus from the grave to the embrace of his sisters, and imparted joy to myriads of troubled hearts, we can repeat the blessed lessons He has left on record, and may, in so doing, console some who are now wretched. We behold the Redeemer engaged in prayer; and though we dare not adopt that language of authority which He could justly employ, and say, "Father, I will," we may adopt the language of penitent faith, and, pleading the name of our Redeemer, may so ask and receive that our joy will be full. We listen whilst the incarnate Son of God offers praise: "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." Though

the Lord Jesus had not to offer thanks for pardoning and renewing grace, we may learn from Him to praise the name of our Lord. In every aspect in which the perfect Model is contemplated, a devout mind may obtain profitable instruction. Jeremy Taylor, in his "Exhortation to the Imitation of Christ," says: "It is reported in the Bohemian story, that St. Wenceslaus their king one winter-night going to his devotions in a remote church, barefooted, in the snow and sharpness of unequal and pointed ice, his servant Podavivus, who waited upon his master's piety, and endeavoured to imitate his affections, began to faint through the violence of the snow and cold, till the king commanded him to follow him, and set his feet in the same footsteps which his feet should mark for him: the servant did so, and either fancied a cure, or found one; for he followed his prince, helped forward with shame and zeal to his imitation, and by the forming footsteps for him in the snow. In the same manner does the blessed Jesus; for, since our way is troublesome, obscure, full of objection and danger, apt to be mistaken, and to affright our industry, He commands us to mark His footsteps, to tread where His feet have stood, and not only invites us forward by the argument of His example, but He hath trodden down much of the difficulty, and made the way easier and fit for our feet. For He knows our infirmities, and Himself hath felt their experience, —in all things but in the neighbourhoods of sin;

and therefore He hath proportioned a way and a path to our strengths and capacities, and, like Jacob, hath marched softly and in evenness with the children and the cattle, to entertain us by the comforts of His company, and the influences of a perpetual Guide."

## CHAPTER IV.

## CRIMES PERPETRATED BY WICKED TALKERS.

"THEIR throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." (Romans iii. 13, 14.)

"I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,  
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy  
Baited with reasons not unplausible,  
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,  
And hug him into snares."—*COMUS*.

PIRATES have ever been regarded as enemies to the human race. A high authority in English law has in modern times declared, "With professed pirates there is no state of peace. They are the enemies of every country, and at all times; and therefore are universally subject to the extreme rights of war." Those of the Greek states which had much to do with maritime affairs might well endeavour to destroy those nefarious murderers who infested their coasts; and in later times powerful governments have felt it needful to send forth their armaments to subdue villains of the same class, who perpetrated their crimes among the islands of the Eastern Archipelago, and in the neighbourhood of Algiers, Morocco, and elsewhere. The privateer to a considerable extent resembles the pirate. The former is, indeed, com-

pelled to ask a sanction from some belligerent government, and is supposed to be zealous for the honour of his country : he is expected to make prizes of no ships but those belonging to a hostile power ; and is disarmed by a proclamation of peace. But, with or without these restrictions, the pirate and the privateer alike endeavour to seize by violence as much private property as they can ; and, having thus gained possession of it, employ it for their own advantage. In striving to secure the booty, neither pirate nor privateer will hesitate to slaughter those who attempt to hold their own. Merchant-ships, prepared for no act of aggression, are the prey which both the pirate and the privateer prefer. It mattered little to those on the eastern coasts of England, and elsewhere, who suffered from the descents of Paul Jones, whether that notorious buccaneer was provided with letters of marque or not. Whatever may be the result of long-continued hostilities, we may hope that the world will not often again witness, in the commencement of a war, the licensing of selfish men to murder and plunder on their own account. The motive of such proceeding has doubtless been the desire of riches. The men would rather not have murdered crews and passengers, but they must have the gold. We find, however, that, when wicked men have long employed their weapons in this atrocious manner, they have at length found a horrid delight in cruelty ; and atrocious deeds have been performed when no gain was to be secured.

Now, it so happens, that advancing civilization,



beckoned on and sustained by Christianity, has, among its other achievements, swept pirates and buccaneers for the most part from the ocean, and has obtained from some of the most powerful European nations a formal condemnation of privateering. But there are in every land, and even in Britain itself, many who employ their tongues in a manner much resembling that in which pirates were wont to use their cutlasses and pistols. When evil words are uttered, the speaker, generally, has some deliberate purpose hereby to accomplish his selfish ends. The words are as weapons, by the use of which he hopes to secure what he could not righteously claim. But, as pirates, accustomed to deeds of cruelty, frequently inflicted suffering on those who came into their power, from mere wantonness of their hard hearts, so we find that those who are accustomed to employ their tongues in the service of the Adversary often utter words of gratuitous sinfulness. They have no gain in prospect, but merely yield to the impulses of their nature, depraved as springing from an evil stock, and tenfold more corrupt in consequence of habitual transgression. We have a twofold motive for considering the crimes perpetrated by wicked talkers. In the first place, we have need to employ constant vigilance and prayer, lest we should be induced to commit the very evils which we abhor in others. We read, "The wicked are estranged from the womb : they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent : they are like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear." In

speaking of "the children of disobedience," we are constrained to acknowledge that among them "we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." There was in us whilst infants, as in others, the disposition to secure what we desired, even though truth must be sacrificed; and to utter passionate and peevish cries, before we had learned to articulate distinctly. There was in us, as in others, a predisposition to copy the evils we saw in those around us. Our nature presented a material, to be operated on, which would more readily receive evil impressions, and more firmly retain them, than impressions of good. Moreover, we are constantly exposed to the efforts of that cruel foe who employed words in presenting that first temptation, the success of which so awfully changed the nature and condition of our race; and who now endeavours to employ human lips in his unhallowed service. We are appalled when we ponder the declarations of holy Scripture concerning the abuse of the power of speech, and when we observe that those declarations are sadly justified by the conduct of men; yet we are in danger of being gradually drawn from the paths of rectitude, so as to incur the same condemnation.—A second reason for considering the crimes perpetrated by wicked talkers is, that we are in danger of being injured by their words. The evils inflicted by the tongues of ungodly men have never been recounted, and never will be, until the great day. We

have need to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Our gentleness and charity must never be allowed to degenerate into heedlessness and credulity. We read concerning the blessed Master, that, when His enemies employed their words as a wide-spread net in which to entangle Him, "He perceived their craft." We are cautioned against "the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." We have need to walk circumspectly, using our eyes to the utmost. So shall we walk safely. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." To consider how dreadfully the marvellous gift of speech has been abused, is not pleasant; yet profitable lessons may be learned thereby.

1. *Wicked men endeavour, by means of their tongues, to purloin their neighbours' property.*—In our days, piracy on the high seas is an employment decidedly unsafe. The British flag waves over so many coasts, and British frigates cruise in so many seas, that the black flag must not show itself. Besides, the standards of other nations now float near harbours and bays whence the banditti of the ocean used to issue. Even man-stealing is discountenanced. All civilized nations profess to condemn the accursed traffic. The slave-vessel is no longer fitted out at Liverpool, nor are the shackles forged at Birmingham or Sheffield, nor is the required capital supplied from London. Man's cruel selfishness finds many checks; and, among others, the self-love of his fellows. Society erects its safeguards. Men of great physical

power, or of unusual daring, or of insatiable cupidity, find themselves opposed by entire communities, if they attempt to plunder and destroy either on land or sea. The weak find their safety in laying aside to some extent their selfish devices, and banding together for mutual protection. We have no great occasion to fear highway-robbers or pirates. But, alas, the evil dispositions of the carnal mind still prevail. The men who might have figured at Hounslow Heath, or on the high seas, now endeavour to wrong their neighbours behind the counter, or in the market-place. In this form of wrong-doing there is frequently just so much of self-deception as enables the perpetrator to hold up his head unabashed among his fellows, but does not suffice to maintain tranquillity of mind. "That sugar is equal to anything at the price in the whole town." The tradesman knows that some of his competitors are selling a much superior sugar at that price; but he satisfies his conscience with the reflection, that he, certainly, is not gaining an unreasonable profit on the article he sells. The exact truth, however, he thinks, will not answer his purpose. So a falsehood is employed, and then a sort of explanation is offered to his conscience.—"That style is very fashionable. Indeed it is just out, and has taken amazingly." The mendacious assistant who makes such affirmation is calculating what his perquisite on the dress will amount to, as a bonus has been offered on its sale since the close of last season. Perhaps he comforts himself by the consideration, "This customer apparently

lives in the country ; and, therefore, the dress will answer her purpose just as well as though it had been brought out this season. It is not likely that anybody in her village will have had one like it ; or that any meddlesome town-friend will mortify her by telling her that it is old-fashioned." The young man imagines that the real truth would not answer, and yet he does not wish to feel that he is telling a lie to gain half-a-crown.—"These are salvage-goods, madam. They were bought immediately after the great fire in Manchester. We are selling them ruinously low. Fear the Insurance Company will scarcely be able to meet their liabilities. But the goods must be turned into money." Or, "These gingham were saved when the Non-such steamer was lost, coming from Glasgow. Nothing like the rail, ma'am, for expedition and security. Penny-wise and pound-foolish to send for goods by water. You see the salt water has slightly damaged them here and there ; but they are a bargain." The man knows, in reference to the gingham, that all the maritime disaster which ever occurred happened in their cellar ; and that the other goods were carefully singed in the back-warehouse. But he quiets his conscience by thinking that they would have been neither better nor cheaper had they passed through ten fires, or reposed for a month in the depths of ocean.—"Sir Henry B. had a coat from this very cloth. A better piece was never manufactured in the West of England." Then, *aside*, "The shop-walker told us to talk in that way, and the responsibility

rests with him." So the salesman endeavours to be comfortable, though he knows that Sir Henry has had no cloth from them since that piece came from Bradford.—"That horse is sound, and as gentle as a lamb. As for falling, he never so much as stumbles." So says the horse-dealer, and then soliloquises, "Hope it will prove so, but am glad the gentleman is taking him to the Continent."—Adulteration and counterfeits abound everywhere. This calls for much verbal falsehood. Herein the youths who are taking their places behind our counters are, in too many instances, exposed to great temptation. To one who had been favoured with early religious training, but had, unhappily, floated with the stream, this question was put: "Suppose a young person were known to have, in an eminent degree, every other qualification for service at the counter, except a willingness to deceive, would your employers retain him or her?" The assistant to whom this question was put was in the service of a firm in Manchester, who were doing an immense business, and engaging three or four score employés, male and female. The reply was, "Most certainly, that assistant would not be retained. Some deceive the customers much less than others, and do not lose their situations. But, if it were known that the assistant would never depart from the bare truth, he must leave. His conduct would be regarded as injurious to the whole establishment. I am certain he would have to go at once." We must not suppose, however, that such conduct ensures prosperity. A few years after the

inquiry just reported, I passed along that street in Manchester, and, observing that changes had taken place, inquired what had become of that firm. I was told that they had long ago become bankrupt ; that they had failed three or four times, and were now doing a small trade in an obscure neighbourhood, and, apparently, struggling hard for bread.

2. *Wicked men will, for gain, utter falsehoods which have been invented by others.*—We have an instance in the conduct of the Roman soldiers who composed the guard around the sepulchre of our Lord. The sight of celestial beings so terrified them, that, for the time, they became powerless. The warriors sent forth from Rome were not wont to quail before any ordinary foe. But the soldiers trembled when visited by beings wearing the appearance of men, but clothed with more than earthly splendour. If their minds were not altogether darkened, or strangely prejudiced, this heavenly vision must have convinced them that Jesus of Nazareth was no impostor. One of their own officers had been convinced that He was more than human, on observing the marvels attendant on the crucifixion. But here were additional wonders and signs. These soldiers had no need to fear Jewish priests and scribes. They did not fear them. But they were willing, even amid these solemn events, to utter an awful and deliberate falsehood, for the sake of reward.—In speaking of the deceit employed in trade, we glanced at assumed pretexts or extenuations. But when the conscience has been tampered with for a long time, the transgressor ceases to feel

any need of special pleading. He would tell the soldiers' senseless falsehood twice over for "large money." Were ample wages offered, he would not stay to estimate the amount of guilt, or to make the falsehood consistent with itself. The soldiers were, however, for the time, more successful in their wickedness than many are. It often happens, that wicked people tell the lie, but never receive the anticipated reward. They are *retained* by the devil; they accept his *brief*, do the pleading, and then are cheated out of the fee. Would not many retailers of falsehood discover, if they fairly balanced accounts, that, instead of "large money," they had not gained, on an average, sixpence apiece by the falsehoods they have uttered? Others would find they had lost much belonging to both worlds. But these soldiers must have felt self-degraded. They knew that they were employed on the side of falsehood and wrong. The conscience in man does not quietly submit to such outrage. When Stephen was cruelly put to death, the question would naturally arise, "Would these hypocritical pretenders to sanctity have dared to go so far, had it not been for our lie? Just now they said it was not lawful for them to put any man to death; yet they have incited the mob to this murderous deed; and one of their learned ones, of whose holiness they boast, allowed the clothes of these perjured villains to be laid at his feet. Was that young and ardent Pharisee deceived by our lie?" Did not those soldiers long to utter the word which would put to confusion these priests, so fitly compared to



whited sepulchres? But their lips were sealed. Other soldiers, too, who had received no share of the money, would sarcastically inquire into this marvel of Roman soldiers sleeping on guard,—and knowing minutely what happened whilst they slept,—and never being called to account for their fault, though held to be so serious a breach of military discipline! Long after the money, large as it was, had been expended, the sting remained within them. In the end, falsehood will always prove bitter as wormwood.

3. *Wicked men will deny the truth rather than endure suffering.*—Jezebel's character, as portrayed in Scripture, is distinguished by awful consistency. During early life, the Good Spirit had, doubtless, made His voice heard. But, from the time she shared the throne of Ahab, her heart appears to have been yielded to the Wicked One, without reserve. Some important design has to be accomplished when such individuals are raised to power. To us, nevertheless, such an arrangement of God's permissive providence appears inscrutable. It is probable that thousands of minds have pondered the question, Why was the late Queen of Madagascar allowed to live so long? Why should that one woman be permitted to stay the progress of the Gospel in a large island; to harass, torment, or destroy the followers of the Lord Jesus; and to mar the interests of a mighty people? Why was not her husband spared to fill the throne, or her son speedily raised to that dignity? Jezebel's exaltation over Israel seems to us equally mysterious. We must wait until all is explained by Him who

cannot err. Jezebel appears never to have deviated from the path which her selfishness and pride had marked out. She never swerved, never hesitated, on account of fear, or affection, or pity, or remorse, or any other emotion. There was a oneness of purpose in her wicked course, which was truly appalling. When her husband, perhaps as wicked as herself, but certainly weaker, repined because he could not have the vineyard upon which he had placed his desire, Jezebel at once prepared to seize it. The king laid upon his bed, with his face turned away from his attendants, and refusing to talk or eat, appears despicable. But we are filled with awe, as well as indignation, as we study the character of that tigress-like queen, who could say, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." It was evident that the proud and cruel woman would commit any wickedness, rather than falter in her path. No genius, or diplomacy, or intrigue, was employed. Jezebel approaches her prey with the utmost directness. Her message to the chief men of Jezreel was, "Accuse Naboth of blasphemy, and then put him to death." It does not appear that she condescended to offer any bribe to those who were to be the instruments of her cruelty. Most likely, there were, among the elders and nobles of Jezreel, some who respected the religion of Moses, and David, and Elijah. Many of the citizens had, doubtless, been present on Mount Carmel, when descending flame attested Jehovah to

be the God. Naboth, in consequence of his patriotism, and noble resistance to tyranny, must have been highly esteemed. Even if Naboth had enemies, these must have been startled at such a manifestation of diabolical cruelty, injustice, and profanity. Yet two men could be found, (they were, indeed, "sons of Belial,") who were willing to utter the required perjury. Naboth must not only be murdered, but his good name must be tarnished. He was to die as a blasphemer and a traitor. Others, of high repute, could be found willing to listen to the lie, and then, as judges, to doom the innocent to a death of violence and shame. Then others were willing to unite with the witnesses in the execution of that monstrous deed. Perhaps the absence of any bribe would be pleaded in the court of conscience as an excuse. They gained nothing from the transaction. They had no part in their neighbour's vineyard, the inheritance of his fathers which he had prized so much. The perjured witnesses were actuated by fear. Jezebel's slaughter of the Lord's prophets was well known; and, even after the marvels witnessed on Mount Carmel, she remained unchanged. They must swear as they were instructed, in order that they, with their families, and their fellow-citizens, might escape impending ruin. Might they not be regarded in some sort as patriots? This sort of sophistry might avail during the excitement of that dreadful day, but it could afford no comfort afterwards. Could those two men ever be happy again? When they were required to cast the first stones at

that innocent man, and the glance of his eye fell reproachfully on them, would they not tremble? The dying man knew, and they knew, where the guilt of his murder rested. Can we conceive that these base wretches would ever forget that hour, and that glance? When the prophet's denunciation against Ahab and Jezebel was pronounced, would they not feel that the curse reached to them? When the righteous sentence was executed upon the crowned transgressors, would not the perjured men, if spared so long, have dreadful forebodings? Better for them, far better, had they forsaken home and country to escape the fury of the queen, or actually fallen victims to her displeasure. We are taught that "the fearful" are exposed to the endless woes included in "the second death." By "the fearful," in such connexion, we are to understand those who are so afraid of their fellows as to sin against God.

4. *Wicked men will attempt to deceive, in order to gain applause.*—The temptation to which Ananias and Sapphira unhappily yielded was, to seek by improper means the honour which cometh from men. No command had been given to the Christians to sell their property, and to cast the whole into a common stock. This man and woman were laid under no imperative obligation so to do. Thus Peter said to Ananias, "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" But many among the disciples had sold their possessions, and placed the entire proceeds at the feet of the apostles to be employed for the benefit

of indigent brethren, and the glory of their risen Head. In consequence of severe persecutions directed against the infant church, this course of proceeding was not unreasonable. In our days, a community of goods would multiply hypocrites, and might occasion other inconveniences ; but we do not learn that such was the case at that time. Ananias and Sapphira desired credit for giving the entire proceeds of what they had recently sold, yet were unwilling to part with the whole. They therefore kept back part of the price, affirming that what they delivered up was the whole. They did not lie merely to retain the money. This they might have done without any falsehood. They uttered the deliberate untruth in order to secure unmerited applause. Had they, without any prevarication, brought just the same amount, they would have been met with no rebuke. But they could not be content to be less honoured than Joses of Cyprus, and others. Why, the apostles had actually given to Joses a new name, and he was henceforth to be known as "The son of consolation." They could not deny themselves the luxuries and the security which could be ensured by a hidden purse. But they must be distinguished equally with Joses. Hence they uttered the premeditated lie, when regarded as in the immediate presence of God, and transacting business with Him. Their names have, ever since that day, been known to the whole Christian world. But how dreadful the notoriety ! They are known as those who lied unto God, and were smitten at once with death.

5. *Wicked men, by their tongues, injure the character of their neighbours.*—It is somewhat difficult to account for the propensity, frequently manifested, to depreciate the character of those around. To say nothing of injurious words uttered hastily or heedlessly, there are persons who of set purpose toil to undermine the reputation of their fellows. They do not resemble the pirate when about to board a ship which he believes to be laden with gold-dust and ingots, or with silks and jewels; for the slanderer could not, if interrogated, make it appear that he will himself be enriched by his malevolent proceeding. He is more like the old pirate whose nature has at length become so cruel as to find a pleasure when he inflicts suffering, and who is therefore employing his leisure in profitless bloodshed. Slanderers will employ falsehood to an unlimited extent, with a diligence and perseverance worthy of a better cause. From their earnestness, we might suppose that they had lighted on a most remunerative form of service. They could scarcely employ greater energy, if they were for a limited time exploring some vein from which precious metals could be plentifully obtained. Whereas they are only engaged as sappers and miners in Beelzebub's army. They are not enriching themselves. They find neither gold nor silver. They are merely employed to sap, if possible, the fair fame of some neighbour who is worthier than themselves. They are frequently assailing the best men of a township. The reason why they have such dislike to lofty reputations may not at once be apparent.

If my neighbours build their garden-walls very high, the pure air may not so freely sweep around my door. That is a reason why I may not like other people to have lofty garden-walls. If they add a new wing to their house, my prospect will be sadly spoiled. I can now see meadow and woodland, hills and valleys, and sometimes sheep and oxen, plough-boys and dairy-maids ; but I fear I shall see but little from my window, if the enlargement take place. That is a reason why I do not desire a lofty wing just there. If they add a new story to the present dwelling, their roof will be then far higher than mine. The consequence will be, that, in some states of the wind, the smoke will be driven down my chimneys ; and it so happens that I am very particular about my books and papers, and my worthy helpmeet is still more fastidious in regard to furniture and table-linen. That is a reason why I do not wish my dear friend's roof to be higher than my own. But to be surrounded by men whose reputations are really elevated must be an advantage. We derive the benefit in various ways. In such neighbourhood there is *security* : for these are as high walls on every side. What prudent citizen would, in a time of danger, overthrow, undermine, or injure the ramparts around the city where he dwelt ? In such neighbourhood there is *glory* : one small hill can scarcely make any vicinity very attractive ; but when there are many, of various sizes, forms, and degrees of fertility, yet all beautiful, people come from afar to gaze and admire. In such neighbourhood there is

*gain*: the giants of the forest are taller, and straighter, and more comely, because they have grown up in company. But the slanderer would rather sacrifice all, than live surrounded by lofty reputations. Perhaps the chief source of his bad feeling is pride. Of course the high wall which affords protection, and the towering hill which imparts glory, and the majestic cedar, which would confer real gain, may draw off the attention of wayfarers from anything which is, by comparison, diminutive. So, poor and disordered human nature would rather endure loss, or even actual suffering, than not be thought the highest. He who despises the honour which cometh from God is generally intent on securing that which men can give. If the soul neglects the preparation needful for a throne in heaven, it will generally spend some of its best energies in striving for the chief seat in the synagogue on earth. The slanderer *must* lose self-respect, and foster within his heart a brood of evil passions, which will eventually torment him. He is also sure to lose in the end the esteem of those who discern his character; and he will, most likely, become an object of general contempt. Further: we are distinctly and repeatedly taught in holy Scripture how hateful this vice is in the sight of Almighty God, and how ruinous to the perpetrator. Among other charges preferred against the wicked we read the following: "Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as



thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." How we are to treat those offenders, seems to be suggested in the declaration, "The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue." The north wind is frequently felt to be very cold; yet, sometimes, we are willing to endure the chill, rather than to be saturated by descending torrents. We should like the mild south wind, if we could have fair weather with it. But we are thankful for the piercing wind which delays the rain until we can obtain shelter. So, indeed, we prefer a smile to a frown. Yet, now and then, an honest frown is good. Very welcome is it, for instance, when it shames the slanderer. The vile man had just made himself comfortable, opened his well-stored pack, presented us with a sample of his stock-in-trade, and looked round for approval. There were some who love the south wind on any occasion, and peace at any price, and smiles for all. But some honest man dared to frown upon the scoundrel, and he blushed, and hesitated, and departed. Then were we all thankful for the north wind.

6. *Wicked men, by their words, occasion and promote contention.*—Any person who has been accustomed, all his life, to the quiet of a country village, would be surprised to observe with what readiness and expedition an immense crowd can be collected in our large towns and cities, at any hour of day or night, by the cry of fire. Suppose that he is visiting a friend in some manufacturing town. They have sat

together until long after midnight, talking over the past. They are recalling days when they walked together to the village-school, and played together on the village-green. But their conversation is interrupted by the policeman's rattle, and a cry of fire. They sally forth in the direction of the red glare they see in the distance. Presently they hear the rumbling of the engines hurrying toward the scene of the disaster. They follow quickly. A few more streets, and round another corner, and they are as near the fire as they can safely come. To the surprise of our bucolic friend, who has seldom been out of his own bed at that hour of night, he finds hundreds looking on, as steadfastly as though they had received a summons to be there, under penalty, as legal witnesses. A similar crowd he will find the next night, if another fire occur. There is considerable variety in the conduct of those who comprise that crowd. For ourselves, we are prudently stationed so as to see all, yet not incommode the firemen, or expose our persons to any danger. The firemen are nobly doing their utmost to extinguish the flames, and meanwhile to remove whatever combustible they can. Some strong men from the crowd are now rendering their aid. Owners of property are endeavouring to rescue a cash-box, or a child, or anything valuable which is missing. Men are smoking, women are gossiping, lads are playing, until some exciting crisis arrives. Perhaps, if the fire is so extensive as to furnish scope for their operations, amid the flames or the spectators, a few of the

swell-mob are present, seeking to enrich themselves. But we do not observe one employed in adding fuel to the flames. If such a wretch were discovered, he would be treated with universal execration. Even those two light-fingered professionals who just now approached our little group, in hope that, while one of them volunteered a little information concerning the premises on fire, the other might profitably examine our pockets, would cease from business to express their indignation at such villany.—But in many neighbourhoods there are people who bring fuel to feed the unholy flame of anger. We read, “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.” A coal-heaver’s employment is honourable, if the fuel is dealt out aright; but it becomes infamous, when the man toils in order to injure others. We cannot but wish that some of those zealous but guilty coal-carriers would adopt the profession of firemen, and display equal energy in the Peace-Brigade. A nation mourned when Mr. Braidwood lost his life in the attempt to extinguish the devastating flame, and sought to honour his memory; but that nation justly frowns on the incendiary, and brands his name. The Great Teacher has said, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”


7. *Wicked men endeavour to lead others into sin.*—In our own days this danger commonly assumes the form of enticement. Occasionally the Christian may

be in peril from the direct opposition of ungodly men, as manifested by their threatenings, ridicule, and sarcasm. But in our country, and in our times, the power of persecution is limited. The law protects us, and public opinion often shields the feeble. We read, concerning the unrighteous condemnation of our blessed Lord, that the multitude, instigated by their rulers, "were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified. And the voices of them, and of the chief priests, prevailed." That was, certainly, the most awful conquest ever achieved by human voices. Since then, indeed, the voices of ungodly men have often prevailed against the disciples, as on that momentous occasion against the Lord. There have ever been loud voices raised against the right and the true. Here and there such prevail even now. But what we have chiefly to dread is the siren whisper of the tempter. Gentle voices are heard on every side alluring the unwary to destruction. Sinners entice in this fashion: "Come with us: . . . we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse." There is here an appearance of generosity; but the adepts in crime never invite an inexperienced youth to have one purse with them, unless they are satisfied that he will place in that purse far more than he will take out. At other times the tempter hopes that he will be able to gratify some unholy passion, and then shake off his victim. Week by week there are sinking down into depths of infamy, never again to take

their place among the honoured and beloved, unhappy females who have listened to the flattering words of some base man who has whispered, "I will make thee my wife speedily." The youth of both sexes have need to cry mightily to God, that He would impart unto them Divine wisdom, "to deliver from the way of the evil man," or "to deliver from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words." At other times it is difficult to discern any motive by which the ungodly can be influenced, except the desire to have many around them acting like themselves, and thus to augment their own false security. However influenced, these agents of Satan would do well, before uttering any word which may lead some to forsake the right way, to ponder that solemn declaration of our Lord: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

8. *Wicked men dare to defy Almighty God.*—The scoffer may appear, at first sight, to be more daring than his fellow-sinners; but we are inclined to think that this is not always the case. Some robber chieftain is summoned to surrender. His retreat has been discovered. The fastness cannot hold out long. A messenger demands an unconditional surrender. The leader of the banditti knows their weakness. But he desires not that it should be made more manifest either to himself or to his comrades. He therefore sets the musical instruments they possess

to pour forth loud notes of defiance, and all his followers to utter loud shouts. This may appear a manifestation of courage; but, in reality, it is the result of fear. The intention is to drown the voice of the messenger, who is able to show that any attempt at resistance is as foolish as unlawful.—When a sceptic, without any careful consideration of the evidences of Christianity, adopts some old sophism which has been fully refuted a hundred times, and then loudly proclaims his disbelief in the entire Bible, because there is something in it which has the appearance of discrepancy, the man is but making a loud noise lest the truth should make its voice more distinctly heard. When an infidel boasts that he is an atheist, and employs his speech to deny the existence of that all-powerful Creator who bestowed that power upon him, uttering this denial without any earnest and candid examination of those abundant proofs of design which are scattered everywhere around him, the boast is but a noise kept up lest the truth should trouble him more than it has already done. We hope that profanity and blasphemy are less prevalent than they used to be. Perhaps, except among the very outcasts of society, there are not many circles in which it is needful to utter dreadful imprecations, or to employ the name of our Maker profanely, in order to prove our manliness. When this horrid language is employed with the full consent of the will, the effort often is to silence the voice of truth. The sinner is afraid to listen to that Divine monitor, and therefore raises a loud clamour of his



own. Let us pray that we may neither be guilty of wicked talking, nor yet be injured by the sins of others. Evil words often prove fatal to those who listen ; and, without repentance, always prove fatal to those who utter them. An apocryphal writer teaches us an important lesson, when he affirms, "There is a word that is clothed about with death."

## CHAPTER V.

## BLUNDERS COMMITTED BY CARELESS TALKERS.

"THE tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth ! And the tongue is a fire." (James iii. 5, 6.)

"To slip upon a pavement is better than to slip with the tongue."  
(The Son of Sirach.)

A MAN, through mere carelessness, may kindle a flame which shall occasion widespread ruin. The guilt of incendiarism rests not on his conscience ; yet he may well be unhappy when he reflects on the destitution and sorrow which he has occasioned. A poor wanderer obtains permission to sleep in one of the outbuildings attached to a farmhouse, and is furnished with a little food. Though his supper is coarse, he sleeps soundly among the dry straw. In the morning he breakfasts on the relics spared from his evening's meal, with, perhaps, the addition of a draught of milk which the worthy dame could not refuse. He now thinks of resuming his journey ; but, before doing so, he determines to indulge himself with one pipe of tobacco. All the good folk of the farmhouse are engaged in their respective pursuits ; and, as there is no one to forbid him, he seats himself on the sheltered side of a haystack, where



already the rays of the morning sun fall with pleasant brightness and warmth. He would not wilfully do any harm to the kind farmer and his family. Indeed, vagrant as he is, the man really feels a degree of gratitude to them for the shelter allowed, and the victuals given. Perhaps it would not be well to inquire into the wanderer's antecedents. Possibly he may sometimes have both coveted and taken a chicken which came in his way. But he certainly will not rob this farmer's hen-roost or granary ; and he would grow indignant if anyone else attempted to do so. But, in the meanwhile, he is, unintentionally, inflicting on his benefactors an irreparable injury. The ashes are knocked out of his pipe, and the blackened clay put into his pocket, and the man trudges along, though stiffly. After a time the muscles move with greater ease, and he quickens his pace. One hill after another is climbed, and descended on the farther side. The clear and bracing air of morn invigorates him. He lodged to his satisfaction last night ; he had almost enough to eat this morning ; the weed he deems fragrant was not wanting : nature now smiles around him ; and he will leave troubles to the future. Arrived at the summit of another hill, he pauses to take breath. He turns round to see the country he has traversed since breakfast. Here and there he can discern the road along which he has come. As he idly traces it, he observes, in that direction, volumes of smoke arising, and thinks he can discern, even though the sun shines brightly, the appearance of flames. As

nothing else occupies his mind, he endeavours to settle to his own satisfaction what is the cause of that spectacle. He can scarcely believe it is the burning of thorns and weeds in the fields. But, certainly, that seems the most probable hypothesis. He adopts that; for he has no time for useless speculation. He begins once more to feel hungry. The brisk flow of spirits is succeeded by a keen appetite, which imperatively demands a speedy gratification. So the subject of the fire in the distance is banished, as irrelevant to the urgent business now to be entered upon. He looks about for some farmhouse in the valley; and, having espied one, hastens in that direction. A little before he arrives at the farmyard, he mechanically assumes the appearance of weariness and pain, and he adapts the story of woe he will tell, if needful, by suitable reference to the topography of the neighbourhood, and to the benevolent inhabitants. He has so far descended the hill, that, if he were to look around, he could not see either flame or smoke; but he really does not endeavour to see them. The smoke arising from the kitchen-chimney of the farmhouse just before him has much greater attraction. His meditations are concerning his next meal. He wishes to secure by persuasive words some little addition to the broken victuals of which he feels almost certain. Why may he not secure both rasher and pence? His hopes have been raised by the kindness he met with at his last resting-place. The world seems a kindlier place than it did yesterday noon. The labourers are coming from yon fields, having left

plough and harrow at rest, and are making for the same attractive centre.

Meanwhile, the homestead which the vagrant left a few hours ago has become the scene of confusion, and fear, and distress. A short time after his departure the cry of fire is raised. One of the maids discovers a flame rising from one corner of the rick-yard. She shrieks aloud in alarm, and rushes about calling for someone to come and put the fire out. Those members of the household who are in the house, or near, together with a few people from neighbouring cottages, rush to the spot. At first the little crowd consists, for the most part, of old women and little children, with the mistress, her daughters, and maid-servants. The only tall lad present is asked to run for master, foreman, fire-engine, blacksmith, wheelwright, water, buckets, and numerous other personages and things. At length a large force is collected. Some were summoned. Some heard the shrieks. Some saw the blaze. Some were coming for things forgotten. Some found others running, and therefore ran too. Then begins the vain attempt to combat flame raging in a rick-yard. Experienced firemen, with all the appliances of their useful profession, could have done but little. As it is, the labourers, headed by their master, and supplied with water by the women, contend, bucket in hand, with the dreadful foe, but contend in vain. They are driven back from stack to stack. Hay, barley, oats, wheat, beans, all fall successively into the insatiable maw of the invader. It seems probable that no part of the

homestead will be saved. Children and valuables are hastily removed. Horses and cattle are driven from the stables and outhouses. The furniture is placed upon waggons. Fortunately, however, the distance between the blazing stacks and the house is considerable, and the wind changes so as to drive away the flame. The dwelling escapes. The destroyer, as though wearied, makes no farther advance. The fires burn low, and are at length extinguished. The residents, at length, venture to restore the furniture to the rooms from which it was so hastily removed. At nightfall the farmer and his family are talking over the sad events of the day, fully satisfied that the last spark has been extinguished, and debating how the first spark was kindled. They speak of the vagrant who was allowed to lodge in the out-buildings. It was believed that he departed early. They have no reason to think that he would wilfully do such mischief. Still, the evidence against him is such, that the farmer resolves never to harbour another vagrant. The good woman purposes to harden herself against every such application for aid. Orders are issued to men and maidens accordingly. When the rest of the family have retired to repose, the worthy couple spend hour after hour endeavouring to make out that they will still be able to pay their way. There will be something from the Insurance Company, though but little, compared with the immense loss. Then they had saved a little of late, and aunt's legacy will soon be paid, and they must retrench where they can. If next

harvest prove good, they will still be able to hold up their head : yet each has painful misgivings.

Here is distress occasioned by carelessness. The man who has caused the mischief cherishes a sort of gratitude for the farmer's kindness. Whilst the honest pair are endeavouring to cheer each other, he is drinking their health, having obtained sufficient alms to provide him with lodgings, and the means of a night's revel. But the mischief itself is much the same as though he had acted the part of a wilful incendiary.—Many of us have need to learn some lesson from this. The blunders committed by careless talkers are very numerous. Many, who never deliberately arrange to employ their tongues so as to injure their fellows, or dishonour their God, do much harm through heedlessness. These are often repenting, and purposing to do better, yet do not find it easy to reform. It may be useful to inquire into some of the occasions of such blundering ; remembering how it is written, "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth ! And the tongue is a fire." .

1. *We may blunder in consequence of unsuspected evil still remaining within our hearts.*—A London citizen, during autumn enjoying a few days in the country, is taken by his friend to some moorland which has been enclosed within the boundaries of the farm. The farmer inquires, "What sort of a crop shall I have here next harvest ?" His citizen-friend replies, "I see you wish to make sport of my ignorance of agricultural matters. Come, and pay me your long-promised visit to the metropolis, and I will return

the compliment as good-naturedly as you give it. There are mysteries around St. Paul's, of which you innocent provincials have little idea. As to your crop, however, I know what a furze-bush is, and can distinguish thorns from apple-trees, and thistle-stalks from springing wheat, even in October. You will have no harvest here worth a groat." Late in the following autumn the agriculturist again welcomes his friend from town, and, in the course of their explorations, they arrive at the scene of their former conversation. "Well, you have had no harvest here; but you will have one another year. I could not have thought it possible for such alteration to be made in twelve months. Corn already springing. Where all was waste, there is not a weed. Thistles and other noxious growths destroyed since I was last here. You farmers begin to bestir yourselves at last. Not a weed left. Wonderful!" His friend acknowledges, with modest pride, that much has been done, but adds, "As for weeds, we must wait awhile. I have spared neither trouble nor expense; but I fear they are not all destroyed. We broke up the ground soon after you left us last year. Since then we have been at it almost continually. Week after week have my men and horses been here. We collected roots, and weeds, and other rubbish, into immense heaps, and burned them as soon as they were dry. The land seemed to be cleared, yet we soon found more by waggon-loads; and an abundance more, again. After the hot suns of summer, rain fell; and we discovered that many of the weeds had retained their

vitality. At length we ventured to put in the tillage, and eventually the seed. I have no doubt of reaping here; and a good crop too, if Providence favour me. But as for weeds, I dare not boast. Just run down next summer for a day or two, and you will see. Showers and warm sunshine will bring up what we cannot now perceive."

A gracious change occurs in the human soul at the period of its conversion. Previously, although it drank in the rain coming oft upon it, thorns and briars were its only produce. Now it is as the earth which "bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed." But, in order to know whether or not weeds remain, we must wait and watch. We have sometimes formed too high an opinion of our spiritual condition. We have thought that love alone dwelt within our heart. Perhaps love did reign there. But, though within the enclosure there was good fruit, there were also roots of evil. Sometimes the sunshine of prosperity draws out the latent evil. When a merchant has succeeded well in business, and has removed to a large house, let him take care that, in church-meetings, and elsewhere, his tongue betray not the vanity of his heart. Let him not speak as though he believed, because he had been clever in acquiring money, he must in all things be wiser than his fellows; or as though, because his subscription was the largest, his word should be law to an assembly where there are, perhaps, several who, in the sight of the Divine Master, are more liberal than himself. So, any office-bearer whose

services are valued, and any young lady who is admired, may find that the warm sunshine is fostering weeds which had been unsuspected. All have need to seek the sanctifying grace of God, and meanwhile to guard their lips.

The evil is sometimes made apparent, also, during days of gloom. When we are becoming poorer, feebler, and less esteemed than heretofore, there is danger of yielding to discontent, and envy, and unbelief. To rejoice with them that do rejoice is often a more difficult task than to weep with them that weep. We need more than ordinary grace to be gladdened by the prosperity of those around us, when our lot is one of painful and long-continued adversity. When the pelting showers have long descended, and the clouds return after the rain, hardy weeds make their appearance; and, if unchecked, will soon attain a dangerous growth. Hence words of peevishness, or of ill-nature, have been uttered by those who, when endeavouring to begin the day aright, intended not to offend with their lips.

2. *We may blunder in consequence of the force of habit.*—He who would change the course of a river must do his work thoroughly. Ages gone by, the cause might be trifling which made the stream take that course rather than any other. But, during those uncounted years, it has worn for itself a deep channel. Unless the alteration be complete, the water will some day return to its old bed. A pendulum will continue to vibrate long after the moving power has been withdrawn. A branch, once crooked,



though the force which rendered it so is taken away, and the branch straightened, will most likely incline in the old direction. Thus it is in the training of human beings. Take two village-lads. Let one of these spend twenty years at the plough, and the other twenty years on the parade-ground. Their appearance and tread will never be alike again. Take two young men from a somewhat higher station in society. Let one become ensign, captain, and colonel. Let the other become barrister, sergeant-at-law, and judge. By no effort can these two men exchange or reverse their qualifications for service. Make the discovery that one of the hymns which you learned in childhood, and have repeated when you needed comfort a thousand times, was incorrectly rendered by that revered parent who taught it you. Acquire the correct mode. But, in your old age, you will most likely be found repeating it just as your mother taught it, and unable to give the correction. A man wishful to improve his circumstances shall repair to the metropolis. Whether from Inverness or Lothian, Antrim or Tipperary, Cumberland or Hampshire, his provincial mode of speaking will be observed. He succeeds, and obtains wealth, respect, and position. He desires to speak as those around him speak. Why not? He can secure the best instructors, and he has leisure. Is it any more trouble to accentuate and pronounce words properly than to do so improperly? He only wishes to acquire a power which myriads of stupid lads and empty-headed girls have acquired. They have not a

tithe of his mental power and application. They have done, dunces as they were, what he desires to do. Let him do it, then. He cannot. The remark will still be heard, "You would observe that the high-sheriff is from the north;" or, "His lordship, the mayor, is a native of Ireland." When old age arrives, and his vigilance is relaxed, many of the defects which have been for a time overcome will reappear.—So, in the far more important department of Christian morals, it is difficult to speak aright, if we have, unfortunately, been accustomed to speak otherwise. When the heart has been renewed, we do, of course, purpose to employ our lips according to the authorized standard, and the perfect model; and, at the same time, we obtain a gracious power assisting us so to do: yet old habits will not at once resign their power. We may discover that, through thoughtlessness, we are again wandering in the former tracks, and speaking as we were once wont to do.

3. *We may blunder in consequence of yielding unduly to others.*—When our own opinions, inclinations, and interest are not concerned, we are generally disposed, for the sake of quiet, to assent to the opinions of those with whom we are associated. It is pleasanter to sail with the wind than to make headway against it. It is easier to drift down with the current than to take to our oars, and force our way upward. There are great oceanic streams; and an experienced captain will take advantage of these, both to expedite his voyage, and to render it pleasanter. That branch

of the gulf-stream which flows from the shores of North America toward Britain and Northern Europe, often aids the ship from New-York bound for Liverpool. That same current acts as a warm-water apparatus on a huge scale, maintaining the temperature of these highly-favoured islands much higher than in most countries of the same latitude. The stream brings our sailing-vessels, with their freights of cotton, the more swiftly, and prevents the Mersey from being frozen up even in January. We have reason to be thankful for the wonderful arrangements of a gracious Providence. But the ship-master must not depend too much on favouring currents. He has to go to New-York, as well as to return. It is affirmed that near the American coast the gulf-stream flows at the rate of eighty miles a day. But the man who is bound westward must not enter the current, and drift north-east because he can do so without sail, steam, or oar. Stream, or no stream, his task must be accomplished. The merchants of Liverpool, and the mill-owners of Manchester, are wanting cotton, and others are in need of corn ; and the people of America stand in need of Britain's manufactured goods. The voyage must be accomplished.—When no principle is sacrificed, it is amiable to yield to others ; but to forsake the right because others despise it, is culpable weakness. We would not needlessly contend ; but, if it is needful, we must “earnestly” do so “for the faith once delivered unto the saints.” We ought to be amiable and gentle, yet to maintain the right and the true.

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4. *We may blunder in consequence of a desire for victory.*—Some people enter society as though it were a battle-field. They remind us of warriors taking their places on the scene of anticipated conflict; the broad buckler placed before them, their hand on the sword-hilt, and their eyes fixed sternly on the foe. Their words are abrupt and severe, even when no occasion of offence has occurred; and still more hurtful when, as generally happens, they think that somebody means to attack them. There are others who never lay aside the appearance of courtesy, and whose real feelings are of a friendly sort. They wear no sharp-pointed sword, and evidently fear none. But, in their intercourse with friends, they are generally on the look-out for mimic warfare, and hoping for mimic conquest. They remind us of champions riding forth on some day of tournament. The visor is raised, and a smile of real kindness is on their open countenance. But they wish, for the sake of honour and amusement, to give you a throw. The sharp point of the lance is, certainly, covered; for they do not desire to wound. But they would rather tilt with you than ride quietly by your side, although you may be the dearest friend they have. They wish not to injure you; only to triumph over you, and win a garland.—We would not have it so. We love not to be driven continually into wordy warfare, even though of mimic sort. We love to be at rest sometimes. Besides, the covering is apt to drop from the sharp point of the lance. A tournament has been sometimes turned into a battle. Blood has often

flowed, incurable wounds have been inflicted, and death has ensued, when the encounter was recorded as a friendly passage of arms. In love maintain the truth. In doing so, employ all weapons which are lawful, and all the power you possess. But do not contend for mere victory.

5. *We may blunder in consequence of wishing to produce a sensation.*—Most persons desire some sort of mental excitement. Hence those who are exceedingly timid, and entirely harmless, delight to read and hear heart-rending narratives. Crime cannot be so appalling, nor misery so fearful, as to prevent these good sort of people from going into every minute detail within their reach. Herein is the power of tragedy, as found in works of fiction, in dramatic representation, in gossip, and in newspapers. Others, whose minds are adjusted somewhat more accurately, have become satiated with mere tragedy, but find pleasure in what is wonderful in art, science, discovery, history, character, and other branches of human knowledge. While most find pleasure in some form of mental excitement, it is not surprising that many should enjoy the act of producing the desired effect. Public speakers, and those also who exercise their talents within the social circle, are in danger of unduly yielding to this attraction. We must not endeavour to produce mental excitement by any kind of misrepresentation. It is true, that, in the ordinary course of life, most of our affairs are very commonplace. We were not intended to be continually roused into a state of rapture. We are

to seek eternal life by "patient continuance in well-doing." Still, we must be content to state things just as they are. Those who carefully analyse public addresses, of popular and exciting character, will sometimes discover that the periods chiefly applauded are those in which—probably without anything like wilful falsehood—a one-sided view is taken, and an incorrect representation is the result. Accurate thinking would have spoiled the climax, and lost the applause. So, in ordinary talk, a good man becomes a prodigy, and a bad man a villain without any redeeming feature. Storms, fires, accidents, victories, and all things else, are made to assume the appearance of what is marvellous.—Let us never sacrifice truth in order to produce a climax. Let us see that mental excitement leads us to right action. When legitimate, it is too precious to be wasted. Generally, we shall find that it is given to us, as some rare cordial to the warrior, when we are called to perform some feat of valour beyond our ordinary doings.

6. *We may blunder in consequence of being too fond of talking.*—Foreigners regard the English as taciturn, reserved, suspicious, and a somewhat gloomy sort of people. They think that we resemble our country, in being surrounded by barriers of which we are fond, and through which strangers can scarcely find entrance. As the waves around our coast-line used to exclude aliens from ready and frequent intercourse with our nation, so are we said to find pleasure in isolation. We are supposed to part with our words, as we part with our hardware, cloth, and other goods,

for value received. Now, if such really is the character of the British people, there are many exceptions. We have among our acquaintance those who may boast great readiness of speech. They have, indeed, an abundance of talk, with a generous disposition to enrich their associates from that store. That friend is eminently pleasant who will listen by the half-hour. Their pastor is a dear man, and most instructive, because he appears to keep his ears open, and certainly does keep his tongue still. Persons of this class have been described as "mighty in monologue, but not apt at dialogue." Some of them, it may be, have no more vanity than their silent visitors, and are quite as good-tempered. But they must talk. If you please, they must talk; and if you do not please, all the same. Now, in the nature of things, being only human, though worthy specimens of the race, they must at times produce what is second-rate; and, without great care, what is even worse. They mean no harm. They would pour forth something better, if they could do so. But nature has placed limits to their minds, though, apparently, none to the activity of their tongues. We pity the editor of any daily paper. The demand for "copy," of some sort, must be immense and incessant. But the unfortunate man has friends, voluntary contributors, penny-a-liners, advertisements, and other available aids. On the other hand, the propensity of the great talker is to employ no other tongue than his own.—However clever we may be in saying good things, we had better learn to make an end.

7. *We may blunder in consequence of our own previous inattention.*—In numberless instances, statements concerning one fact widely differ, although it is apparent that no speaker has any intention to deceive, or any temptation to do so. A narrative has been strangely distorted in the repetition, within a few minutes of its first utterance, and in the hearing of its author. Some friend entered the room, and one who had hitherto been an auditor volunteered to repeat what he had just heard; and, as the only authority was present, the new speaker, doubtless, tried faithfully to re-produce the statement. Yet the listeners detected inaccuracies, and even disputed among themselves how to correct the mistakes of their friend. Barristers are constantly perplexed by the mis-statements of well-meaning witnesses. Persons whose prejudices, if they have any, lean in the same direction, cannot make their accounts agree. This is often the case with those who desire to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Though they witnessed the occurrence, their attention was imperfect. When the notorious Captain Wilkes, in his ill-judged zeal, violently took the representatives of the Confederate States from on board "The Trent," and from beneath the protection of the British flag, those who were passengers in that vessel were all of one opinion. Several letters were written immediately, on board "The Trent," giving to distant friends an account of the exciting transaction. Some of these were published to satisfy public curiosity. In matters of detail, involving no national or other



prejudice, there were considerable discrepancies. Though the writers believed they were fully alive to all that was transpiring, it is evident that their attention had been imperfect.

8. *We may blunder in consequence of giving credence to incorrect statements.*—It is dangerous to indorse a doubtful bill, and especially perilous for a man to do so who is supposed to be wealthy. If he who is primarily responsible should fail to meet the demand at the proper time, it is very likely that the holder of the security will give himself little trouble concerning the defaulter. He will inquire, Which is the best name? and then instruct his lawyer, "That is the man for me." When in 185— a Joint-Stock bank in S—— failed, in consequence of fraud and reckless speculation on the part of the manager, panic and suffering were widespread. All the shareholders were poorer, through the villany of that man and his accomplices. But the heaviest burden fell on the Directors; and, among them, the richest had to pay most smartly. That gentleman had no desire to be besieged by thousands of claimants, each holding a bank-note, and saying, "Pay me what thou owest." But he well knew that the eyes of the needy were directed toward his mansion and estates; and that, if the panic could not be quieted, the results would be painful. He at once sent, on loan, a hundred thousand pounds. Afterwards he executed a deed giving up all claim to principal or interest, until the bank should have recovered its losses; which was very much like giving the enormous sum.

The man was rich, of course. But even he could not have afforded many such costly mistakes.—Now, do not make yourself responsible for too many reports. If your character is good, you must be very careful indeed, because everyone will refer to you. Should you adopt the precaution of saying who was your informant, it is not likely that your auditor will give himself the trouble of quoting any name but yours. As you are highly esteemed for veracity, the tale, true or false, will be known as yours. It has been said, “Believe only half you hear; and repeat only half you believe.” Where character is concerned, if the statements are favourable to the party spoken of, you may venture a little beyond this rule; if unfavourable, it will not be safe to go so far.

9. *We may blunder in consequence of reaction from the unreasonableness of others.*—Many of us, at times, perceiving some rushing with headlong speed, and to their manifest hurt, along the very path we had deliberately chosen, have felt some inclination to recede. This tendency to reaction exerts a powerful influence in the discussion and settlement of most questions. Those who court the plaudits of the multitude, loudly demand that political power should be so far entrusted to those who have neither education, nor property, nor self-control sufficient to ensure its prudent employment, that, virtually, other classes would be unrepresented. Such oratory has, beyond anything else, prevented the fair consideration of the question, whether or not the franchise may be safely and advantageously extended beyond its present

limits. Entire abstinence from alcoholic drinks, as beverages, is declared by some to be a necessary condition of spiritual life, and of any good hope of heaven. As a natural result, others are unwilling to see the importance of such abstinence as a personal and family safeguard, and the means of extensive usefulness. The fiery declamation of Abolitionists, representing every slave-holder as a demon in human form, and every enslaved negro as industrious, sober, intelligent, and patient, fitted for citizenship at once, has caused some to pause in their efforts to secure the speedy extinction of a monstrous evil. The attempt of an antichristian priesthood to secure its own aggrandizement, and the subjection of all others, has served as a plea for withholding the respect which Scripture assigns to those who worthily sustain the office and fulfil the duties of the sacred ministry. If one darling child should take cold through undue exposure, and the result should be fatal, ten darling children will, most likely, suffer from undue confinement.—We must endeavour to avoid this injurious reaction from our neighbour's errors. If my friend chooses to ride his hobby too far, there is no reason why I should engage and mount a return-hobby.

10. *We may blunder in consequence of a supposed possession of wit.*—It is generally admitted, by all persons of mature age, that edged tools must not be entrusted to children. The story concerning little George Washington, who received a present of a diminutive axe, and, as was natural, used it in chopping his father's favourite fruit-tree, has become

historical. And this, not only because of the important part which the said George afterwards sustained, or because of the impressive manner in which the value of truthfulness is taught in the anecdote, but also because of the naturalness of the whole. Did you never, my grave and judicious friend, feel as though the story of the axe and the fruit-tree had been surreptitiously obtained from your own family-records? The names were different, and some of the details; yet the tale was vastly like what happened to your own child, and also, a long time ago, to your own self. You quite believe that edged tools should not be placed in the hands of children. How difficult for that little boy to allow the mahogany chairs to remain unimproved, when he has a knife in his pocket! and how much self-denial is required in a little girl to refrain from making fringes on mamma's silk dress, when her own scissors are at hand! The instrument need not be very sharp. The child can put to more strength, and the mischief will still be done.—So, we can believe, those who are gifted with readiness and keenness of wit need great self-denial. Shall they hold back the word, or shall they lose a friend? Must the company remain ignorant of the capital joke which has been manufactured in their brain, or shall the cause of Christ be injured? How hard the alternative! The temptation often seems powerful, even when the wit is undiscernible. The instrument is blunt enough, but the operator cannot refrain from employing it. Mischief is then effected, but no credit of any sort is gained.

11. *We may blunder in consequence of misdirected conscientiousness.*—Any power which, while under suitable control, exerts great influence for good, is in danger, should it escape from that control, of doing mischief in a corresponding degree. It was not pleasant, in olden time, to see a stage-coach hurried along by horses which had been frightened into a headlong gallop, and over which the driver had now no command. But it is more terrible to see a railway-train rushing onward, bearing scores of passengers to immediate destruction. Great is the advantage derived from the power of steam, and great is the peril consequent on the carelessness of those who have the management of it.—Now, in many minds, the sense of what is right exerts a most powerful influence. If the Bible is revered, and the aid of the Holy Spirit is implored, and the love of God is enjoyed, there must be great mental infirmity if we get far wrong. Protestantism was soon freed, to a large extent, from the intolerance bequeathed to it by the fallen Church which it had left. Conscientiousness, rightly directed, has enabled true disciples of the Lord Jesus to do, and dare, and suffer much for His sake. Noble words have been spoken under its direction. Thus Paul declared, “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.” “The love of Christ constraineth us.” But whilst, as Saul of Tarsus, he sought not the renewing and enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit, he was the most determined opponent of the Gospel, because, more than others,

he was influenced by misdirected conscientiousness. Others might be bribed to forbearance, but not he. Others might become weary of the task, but not he. Others might be overcome by human sympathies, but not he. Thus, to a large extent, have many been led to deeds of injustice. In our own days, words of bitterness, if not acts of cruel oppression, are sometimes the result of such mistake. The persecutor is severe, because he believes that he is in the right. Do not, practically, claim for yourself the infallibility which you deny to the Romish pontiff.

12. *We may blunder in consequence of the suddenness of temptation.*—Some years ago a young man yielded to the call of the Divine Spirit, and gave his heart to the Saviour. His father had been for many years a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, and had been actively employed in His service. The youth had, therefore, in early life, been taught the way of salvation, and the requirements of almighty God. But, unhappily, he had associated with wicked companions, and formed bad habits. When very young, he had ventured to utter an oath; and, although his father was unacquainted with the extent of the evil, the youth had gradually become an habitual swearer. But, in great mercy, he was led to feel and deplore his sinfulness and folly. He earnestly sought mercy. After a painful and protracted struggle, he obtained the desired blessing, and was enabled to rejoice in the Lord. He felt assured that he had been made a partaker of the pardoning and

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renewing grace of God; he forsook his sinful associates, and identified himself with the church of Christ. Not many days after this happy change, he was riding in the outskirts of the town. His father's business required the employment of horses, and the youth had been a little vain of his own horsemanship. On this occasion he met some young ladies, with whom he was acquainted. He was about to raise his hat, when the horse suddenly started. The hat fell to the ground, and was carried along by the frolicsome wind. The young ladies, of course, manifested their amusement, and the equestrian was in the same degree mortified. Had he been favoured with one instant's warning, he would have avoided the grievous fault he committed. In the confusion and hurry of the moment, he uttered an oath. His pulse had scarcely throbbed again, before he deplored the unguarded word, and sought to repair, as far as possible, the evil. I believe that he never again so offended. Pardon from the Lord was sought and obtained. But the word could not be recalled.—We have need to maintain constant watchfulness over our lips. "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue."

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## CHAPTER VI.

## BLESSINGS CONFERRED BY WISE TALKERS.

"THE words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook." (Prov. xviii. 4.)

"Rising to sing my Saviour's praise,  
Thee may I publish all day long ;  
And let Thy precious word of grace  
Flow from my heart, and fill my tongue ;  
Fill all my life with purest love,  
And join me to the church above."—C. WESLEY.

WHEN Moses had entered on the last year of his life, he sought by much divinely-inspired counsel to lead the people, whom he had loved so ardently and patiently, nearer to their God. Among other declarations concerning the earthly Canaan which they and their descendants, if faithful, should enjoy, we read : "The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills." "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs : but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven : a land which the Lord thy God careth for : the eyes of the Lord thy God are



always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." When the country was described as "a land of brooks of water," there would be a fulness of meaning, and an unutterable pleasantness, which we, however well we may fancy ourselves read up in eastern matters, cannot realize. It would seem, that, while slaves in Egypt, they were employed in the drudgery of artificial irrigation. It was needful that water should be raised by toilsome effort, from the river Nile, to some considerable elevation, that it might be allowed at once to flow upon the fields, or might be kept in large reservoirs for future use. The Hebrew bondmen were compelled to perform this, as well as other wearisome service. They might well exult that their freedom from the drudgery of Egypt was to be permanent. In the land of Canaan they would not be slaves, and many of the circumstances which might have reminded them of their bondage would be absent. Among other pleasant features of the land promised to their fathers, this could not be overlooked by those who had with their foot irrigated the land of their tyrant oppressors,—it was "a land of brooks of water."

Even in our own landscapes a flowing brook is regarded as a beautiful object. Such a stream, especially in dry seasons, has its advantages in England. In its absence, farmers have been compelled to send their teams several miles for a supply of water. The extra labour of the horses was, of course, very great ; and the households were seriously

inconvenienced, when, by any means, the stock happened to be exhausted sooner than had been expected, or when the supply was delayed. "A flowing brook," near to the homestead, would have been most useful. We have known the farmers of a large parish enter into a league with each other, that they would not allow any of their sheep so much as to approach the village-ponds. The prudent men were well aware that in their two reservoirs there was very little water. They also knew that their horses could not work if denied their usual supply, and that their cattle would pine away without a little. The poor sheep, it was presumed, could exist without any moisture but that which they obtained from the herbage in the fields. So a decree was passed by the farmers, to the effect just stated. But the sheep were not represented in that parliament. Like discontented colonists, they refused to be restricted by laws to which they had given no consent. How they communicated with each other I know not; but the leader of a flock found his way through the hedge, and his example was followed. Other sheep found, or made, a gap. It was marvellous to see the entire flock running, and jumping, and rolling down the hill-side, toward the forbidden water. He would have proved himself a clever fellow who had driven them back to their mountain-pasture, before their thirst was slaked. The muddy pond was very grateful to them; but how they would have enjoyed the clear waters of "a flowing brook!"

But in south-eastern lands, whence the imagery of

holy Scripture has been chiefly gathered, "a flowing brook" was of inestimable worth. Thence, in many cases, the families of a village obtained the daily supply which was absolutely necessary for their comfort, and even for their existence. Thither, each morning and evening, young maidens repaired to fetch water. To that stream the hard-wrought labourer, when engaged in reaping or other field-work, was accustomed to go, in order to lave his hands and face, and to quench his thirst. There the weary traveller rested awhile; and, as he tasted of the cool water, flowing so pure at his feet, and found a welcome shade amid the foliage of the trees which flourished there, and listened to the warbling of birds that loved that spot, and felt the gentle air fanning his feverish temples, and dreamily listened to the waters as they flowed over the shining pebbles, was soothed into forgetfulness of sorrows, whether past or anticipated. The pilgrim was enabled once more to lift up his head, and journey hopefully along, because he had drunk of the brook by the way. Even the unreasoning among God's creatures found much that they needed, when they repaired to that flowing brook. These oft resorted thither, and forgot not the benefits there obtained. "The hart panteth after the water-brooks." When chased by the hunters, and ready to die of exhaustion and thirst, it could obtain refreshment in the cool stream. There it could lave its hot and panting limbs. There it could drink as much as it desired. There its strength would be renewed, its agitation allayed. There the

eyes which had been almost strained from their sockets during the agony and terror of its flight, and had become dim when the terrible excitement was over, would resume their brightness, vivacity, and beauty. Viewed in any aspect, "a flowing brook" in an eastern land must have been hailed with interest and admiration. Among other subjects which are illustrated by this image, in holy Scripture, is the speech of those who talk wisely. We are encouraged by the possibility of being thus serviceable to those around us. Instead of being wicked or mischievous, our converse may be of great worth. Divine wisdom will be obtained, if sought aright, from "the Father of lights." Then shall we speak wisely; and we know who has said, "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook."

1. *By speaking wisely, we may benefit the youthful.*—During three or four days in the pleasant month of May, I was, one year, entertained in the hospitable home of a Christian friend. I marked that he was then accustomed, before breakfast, to repair to his green-house. There he had some choice vines. In the cultivation of these he found a pleasant relaxation from business-cares. Each morning, when leaving the green-house, he appeared satisfied that all had been done that could be done. Yet the following morning he was found in the same place, and engaged in a similar manner. Some wayward shoot needed direction, or some feeble one required support, or some redundant one must be cut off. There was

always a task to be done. Apparently, it was not possible to do so much as the task of a week on any one morning. My friend told me that, during a considerable period, he did a little almost every morning except the Sabbath; and then added, "In due time, I have as fine grapes as any in the country. You would be surprised to see the size and beauty which these little clusters will attain."—Christian people have, generally, arrived at something like settled principles in reference to the education of children. They agree that true morality must form the basis of all real education. Other matters may be added as ornaments. But, whatever else children are taught, they ought to be instructed how to deport themselves toward their Maker and their fellow-creatures. Otherwise the whole superstructure, however beautiful, may, at any moment of severe temptation, come down in awful and irretrievable ruin. Christian people are agreed, further, that, in teaching true morality, the Bible must be the textbook. That volume, and that only, is a sufficient rule of faith and practice. Here is the code to be carefully and constantly studied, and the authority to which our appeal must be made. Besides this, we now hear a great deal on the need of training, as well as of teaching. We wish to employ the voice and supervision of those who are, to a great extent, what we desire the children to become. Lessons learned by rote, and repeated to an ignorant, incompetent, or intemperate schoolmaster, are not now deemed sufficient. Even chapters taken from Holy

Writ, when so learned, are not all we desire. Men have made wondrous advances in the matter of education since the nineteenth century commenced. But, after all, most of what has been discovered of late, at the cost of much labour, was contained in sentences familiar to the people of one eastern nation, long before any of the Greek or Latin classics were penned. The training system seems to be embodied in these few lines selected from the ancient Hebrew Scriptures: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Again: "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." It is matter for thankfulness that we have at length begun to understand the lesson which, for more than three thousand years, had been awaiting our attention. We now see that if we desire the youthful around us to prove our comfort, ornament, support, and wealth, we must not be sparing of wisely-directed effort. If the grapes are to excel, the vine-dresser must neither be lazy nor impatient. If little children are con-

stantly under our care, we shall find something to do every day. We cannot do all the work of the week on the first day of the week, though the Sabbath offers special advantages for this sacred toil. Every day a firm, and patient, and gentle, and skilful hand will be needed. If we are faithful in the employment of the means prescribed, we may reasonably hope for good and abundant fruit. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Further, we must bear in mind, that the voice is the most important instrument of training. The truth, as uttered by a wise father, a loving mother, or a kind teacher, will sink far more deeply into the heart, than as merely learned from the printed page. Speak, then, to the little ones, of God, and salvation, and heaven. Speak to them day by day. Give them line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little, as their feeble minds can receive it. Ask of God wisdom that you may speak aright. From the Divine fountain seek constant supplies to your own soul. Then, speak in the family, the Sabbath-school, or by the way-side. Let "the well-spring of wisdom, as a flowing brook," enrich and nourish these tender plants. So shall they become beauteous on earth, and for ever bloom in the heavenly paradise. There are exceptions, doubtless; but, for the most part, those goodly plants in the vineyard of the Lord which have surpassed others, and borne fruit to gladden the heart of the faithful, and recruited the vigour of the weary, were the objects of assiduous culture whilst

yet tender. Youth is the time for deep and lasting impression. We desire that, if spared so long, our young friends may, in thirty or forty years, be models of mature Christian life. But it is not likely that we shall then be on earth to attend to their culture; and, if it be even so, their minds will be much less impressible. Whether in the service of Christ, or of the world, they will then, in all probability, remain the same to the close of life. Words are now to be spoken, which, we trust, will exert a beneficial influence when the snows of many winters have whitened our graves.

Even in the case of those young persons who, unhappily, wander far from God, the echoes of good words heard in the school, and especially in the godly home, are not speedily silent; and frequently, after long years, they prove influential. Instances are numerous. Let us refer to an instance connected with the saddest departure from God, and one recorded by the pen of an adversary. Attempts have been made to reclaim to virtue the outcast women who infest the metropolis. It was thought by some devoted and self-denying Christians, that a congregation of this wretched and despised class might be gathered at midnight. The attempt was made, and refreshments were provided, as an inducement which the poor creatures could understand. Of course, there were critics and public censors who chose to ridicule the movement. Such arrangements had been made, that no insinuation could be ventured against the purity of those engaged in this effort to seek and save the



perishing: but it must be stigmatized as useless. There are those who, in the way of their continual occupation, publish groans concerning the vileness and miseries of their fellows, and issue, at the same time, stereotype sneers concerning all who attempt to rescue the sinful and unhappy. They do nothing themselves toward mitigating the abounding evil. Such pretenders to philanthropy sent their reporters on the occasion, who provided a column of type in their usual style, and seemed to exult that Christian ministers and others apparently made little impression on the minds of the unhappy outcasts. But even these scoffers were constrained to record the fact, that, during one of the addresses, emotion was evidently felt, and tears began to flow, and purposes of reformation were speedily expressed. Several declared their willingness to suffer any privation and toil, if they might but be assisted to return to the paths of virtue.—The efforts of godly teachers and parents will frequently prove the means of leading the youthful at once into the way of peace; they will generally restrain those inexperienced ones from entering the crooked ways of profligacy and vice; and, even when the dangerous paths have been chosen, the good words that were heard by the unhappy wanderers in the days of childhood may still awaken a desire to return to the paths of rectitude, and also furnish the clue needed to extricate the fugitives from the labyrinths in which they have become entangled. Let your words be distinguished by gentleness, as well as by worth, “speaking the truth in love;” and

then spare not to utter good words to the young around you.

2. *By speaking wisely, we may benefit the sinful.*—The case of those who have openly expressed a preference for the crooked ways of sin is not so hopeful as that of young people who are yet hesitating at the head of the roads, and undecided which to choose. But, though the salvation of the former has become doubtful, we must not regard it as hopeless. In whatever forms their hostility or indifference to the truth may be manifested, we must not allow despair to paralyse our efforts on their behalf. They may have yielded their whole heart to worldly pleasure, or gain, or honour. While the sparks of their own kindling are bright, and the flame which they have raised burns high, they may prove altogether inaccessible. They are engaged in fruitless effort to find happiness without God. Amid the flutter and excitement of their earthly hopes, they are unwilling to listen to any counsel which would remind them of “the Father of lights” whom they have forsaken. Should they persist in the determination to cast off the fear of God, they must “lie down in sorrow” which will know no end. But it is not improbable, that, in great mercy, the almighty Disposer of events will cause their worldly position to be invaded by misfortune. The fire of their own kindling will burn low, and the sparks will go out, ere the awful darkness of endless shame and woe gather around them. There will, most likely, be some favourable opportunity given to you, for uttering God’s message,

if you are prepared to take advantage of it. There can be no doubt that it is frequently the duty of a Christian believer to reprove, in humbleness and affection, those who in his presence openly transgress the laws of God. In some instances, the reproof might be better delayed, or conveyed in a glance, or sent in writing, if not, perchance, omitted altogether. Christian prudence must direct Christian zeal. But we must not allow *worldly* prudence to assume the garb belonging to *Christian* prudence. The honour and the will of our blessed Master must be regarded, and not our feelings, fears, or interest. And let us not be discouraged because, in this self-denying service, we do not generally witness immediate success. A railway-carriage, which, as night approached, had not been provided with lamps, resounded with horrid imprecations. Three or four men were conversing in language which was coarse and vulgar, and in which there was frequent reference to the place of final punishment uttered with awful flippancy. At length a moment's silence occurred, and a voice, gentle but firm, was heard, asking, "Would it not prove very dreadful to be damned?" Stillness, profound and long-continued, ensued. Nothing was heard, but the rumbling of the wheels along the iron-way, and, at length, the shrill whistle of the engine as the train approached a station. The features of the reproved could not be discerned; and no penitent acknowledgment was made. But who can estimate the results of that solemn silence?—We read, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." We

are to understand, by this proverb, that such is the tendency of gentle replies. There is abundant proof that this is not the invariable result. "Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travel that hath befallen us. . . . Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country. . . . And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword." That was an occasion for trying the efficacy of "a soft answer." The reply sent by the children of Israel was very gentle: "We will go by the highway: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing anything else, go through on my feet." But the "soft answer" did not in this case turn away the "wrath." We read that the pacific reply was met by the threatening, "Thou shalt not go through." Moreover, "Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand." But, while we would not over-estimate the power of "a soft answer," since such mistake would only occasion disappointment, we gladly learn that the influence of gentle words, though not irresistible, is certainly very great. We have need, amid numberless conflicts, prejudices, and errors, and the abounding "wrath" which these occasion, to employ to the utmost the gracious power of gentle speech. By all means, turn the wrath away. Keep it from your door. But remember the most effectual mode of doing so. Kindly tones may bring wanderers back to the mercy-seat.


3. *By speaking wisely, we may benefit the penitent.*—  
“It shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish.” The inspired prophet seems to make the deliverance and gladness of the year of jubilee set forth a greater deliverance, and a higher gladness. Joyous was the sound of those trumpets which announced the great festival. In Canaan, though the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey, there was frequent poverty. The local traditions of our own times furnish no description more affecting than that which opens thus: “Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.” Often was the heritage of a family in the possession of others. Strangers reaped down the harvest, and brought home the produce, and occupied the dwelling, and drank at the well, and claimed the whole. Perhaps those to whom it had once belonged were allowed to toil in the fields, and thus to earn their daily bread. Perhaps some of them had been claimed by a distant creditor, because the land, and cattle, and grain, and household goods proved insufficient to satisfy the claims of the inexorable man. But the law given by Moses recognised no such condition as a Hebrew held by his fellow-Hebrew in hopeless captivity. No formal enactment could at once remove the harshness of those times. But the statutes given in

the wilderness of Zin were intended to meliorate the condition of the poor and the oppressed. Hence a period of universal deliverance was fixed. This appointment could not but impart comfort to the destitute during the years of their sorrow. The aged Hebrew, who had been reduced to destitution, would be consoled by the reflection, that, though he might not be spared to see the glad change, his children might. He would think, "Perhaps I may survive, so as once more to sit in the old homestead, and in summer evenings, beneath the vine and fig-trees, listen to the music of feathered songsters, and to the sweeter music of my children's voices. But, whether such joy is in store for me or not, these children will dwell under the ancient roof." Sweet would be the sound of the two silver trumpets as they were blown by the Levites on the happy morn. The trumpeters would feel themselves highly honoured. Theirs would be a pleasant task. Which of us would not have enjoyed such a privilege of proclaiming that the period of emancipation had arrived?—Now to us is given the higher honour, the greater privilege, of making known a more glorious salvation. We have something to do with summoning those who are "ready to perish." The human voice is the main instrumentality employed. The speedy recovery of our world depends chiefly, under God, on those who talk about Jesus; in cathedrals, in chapels, in cottages, in barns, in the open air, anywhere; on Sundays, holidays, working-days, any time; with classical correctness or homely strength; to persons

of white complexion or black, copper-coloured or tawny ; to the refined or uneducated ;—for the great thing is to preach the Gospel to every creature. Let us then endeavour, guided by the sacred oracles, and aided by the blessed Spirit, to speak lovingly about Jesus and His great salvation. In an hour's consecutive address, or an exhortation completed in fifteen minutes, or a lesson occupying no more than five, or a conversation held in workshop, market, highway, railway-carriage, sick-chamber, anywhere, —let us, as we have opportunity, endeavour to commend the Saviour whom we love. You have heard that the year of Jubilee has arrived ; that our forfeited inheritance has been repurchased for us ; and that each bond-slave, who cries to the great Deliverer, will be both liberated and enriched. Those who are ready to perish may come. Some of these are near to us. We must make the tidings known. Let the sound be heard. Let us, as we can, tell someone concerning the glorious salvation. Especially, let us be quick to discern the sorrow of those who feel the yoke of the tyrant to be intolerable ; and take courage to speak to them of Him who led our wretched spirits from the house of bondage, and imparted to them a new and heavenly joy.

4. *By speaking wisely, we may benefit the tempted.*—In those eastern cities which, for the time, were the emporiums of commerce, the departure of a caravan was an event of great interest. During previous weeks there might be seen gathering to that place persons of all descriptions ; and earnest preparation

was made by residents and strangers. At length the immense cavalcade commences its journey. There are merchants of large property, with a crowd of servants, and camels laden with valuable wares. There are nobles and ladies, attended by retinues of dependents. There are pilgrims, of high degree and of low degree, purposing to visit some famous shrine. There are Jews, wearing the garb of poverty, and assuming the language of obsequiousness, yet generally suspected of concealing vast treasures gained from Gentiles. There is a crowd of poor, homeless, famishing creatures, accompanying the caravan without any very definite purpose, but hoping to obtain a little food in some way. Then there is the imposing military escort, whose duty it will be to protect the caravan from the armed banditti of the Desert, but who now form the chief attraction to idle bystanders. Those persons who had occasion to travel in the same direction would, naturally, so arrange their affairs as to accompany the large caravan. They might be entirely unknown to the wealthy and noble who were about to take the same journey; and from these they might obtain no recognition, and receive no share of their abundance. Yet the poorest pilgrim would not willingly travel across the Desert alone. While forming part of that large company, he had advantages which he could not afford to dispense with. There was, for instance, guidance toward the city or place he desired to reach. There was the opportunity of drinking at wells and reservoirs he might never have discovered, without





the experienced guides. There was protection from Arabs and other marauders. That community of travellers had duties which they owed to each other. They ought to be mutually helpful. The caravan was, for the most part, divided into little groups, the members of which were especially dependent on each other. If needful, they must stimulate their fellows to persevering effort. It was well understood that all must keep in the line of march ; but this was sometimes no easy task. The signal for marching might be given when the hour of midnight had scarcely gone, and sleepers would need to be aroused by their more wakeful companions. Then, in the afternoon, long before the weariness resulting from a prolonged march had passed away, or the heat of the sun had become moderate, it might be decreed that the noontide rest was over. The pilgrim whose feet were blistered all over by constant treading on the scorching sands, and whose eyes were in pain by reason of the hot dust, might strongly believe that a pleasanter path could be found on the outskirts of the caravan, not far beyond the prescribed limits. He would need to be reminded that cruel foes were nigh, who were ready to rob or assassinate him. It would often happen, also, that the poor among the pilgrims considered that they had been insulted and injured by the armed soldiers that formed the guard, but were unmindful of such as had no fee to give. Still, it would be wise to endure all such provocation, and keep a place in the caravan. True friends would show this to the complainers, and strive to

soothe their perturbed feelings. Further, it would often happen, that those who had no means of procuring help were utterly wearied and disheartened; so as, in sheer desperation, to be on the point of resolving to give up the struggle, allow those behind to pass them, and yield to their fate. That voice would be friendly which encouraged and stimulated a despairing one to drag himself onward to the next resting-place, trusting that to-morrow he would be equal to the toils of to-morrow.—Each one who is travelling toward the celestial city sustains relationship to those who are engaged in the same pilgrimage. We all need a helpful word from our companions, because we are all liable to be tempted. We all have, at times, the opportunity of speaking such a word, because we are surrounded by the tempted.

5. *By speaking wisely, we may benefit the sorrowful.*—When St. Paul had placed before believers at Thessalonica some of those glorious truths which afford consolation to the suffering disciples of the Lord Jesus, he added this direction: “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” Some might be ready to think, that, as the topics of consolation had been provided for all by an inspired apostle, and as his letters, with the other scriptures, were in general circulation, each individual would be able to draw from thence all needful help. Most assuredly, the true servants of God do silently gain much from this Divine store. The good man’s “delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate

day and night." Such a one can bear testimony, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Sometimes, at least, he can declare, concerning "the judgments of the Lord," that they are not only "true and righteous altogether," but "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb." Yet we are frequently in such circumstances, and such states of mind, as to need not only the opportunity of reading the word of God for ourselves, but also the supply of heavenly comfort through the instrumentality of our fellow-believers. The provisions of the Lord's house are abundant, and nothing else can relieve the sorrows of our hearts ; but some Christian friend is to be honoured as the almoner of the Divine bounty.

We are often dependent on each other in regard to the blessings belonging to this transitory life. You may have in your recollection the case of some invalid, whose affliction was the occasion of entire helplessness, rather than of violent pain. He could no longer gird himself and go whithersoever he would. Every hour he required, less or more, the kind offices of friends. He has been left alone for a little time, his attendants having been unexpectedly detained. The invalid may be surrounded with means and appliances of comfort, and yet have to endure painful privation. He is thirsty. On the table near him has been placed the pitcher of water, or an orange, or a few grapes, for his use. But his

parched lips remain unmoistened, as he is utterly unable to avail himself of what has been provided. The shades of evening are deepening. Then comes total darkness. Already the lamp has been trimmed and placed on the sideboard. To the healthy it would be but a moment's work to kindle the lamp. But the invalid cannot perform the act. Or the day has been chill, and the intensity of the frost is increasing. The fire has burnt low, and is ready to expire. Sufficient fuel is not only in the house, but in the room. But the invalid, shivering with cold, is altogether helpless. Should the fire go out, he cannot leave his place. He can only hope for the speedy return of those who will minister to his necessities.—In like manner, there is sometimes a partial paralysis of the troubled spirit, during which, though we are not unconscious of the "words" spoken by our gracious Lord for our guidance and consolation, we seem unable to derive from them the help we require. We greatly need the aid of those who, themselves in happier circumstances, or possessing greater fortitude, will apply the heavenly balm to our wounded heart. All our blessings are Divine; but often the water of life, the fruits of paradise, the light of Divine truth, the warmth of heavenly love, are imparted through the agency of our fellow-believers. In times of sore bereavement, of severe pain, of perplexity in business, and of mental depression, those who have aforetime been the most stalwart in the Lord's host, and have pressed to the front of the battle, at length need others to help them. A

chapter read, a prayer offered, counsel given, by one of the feeblest, may give consolation to the stricken champion. Let us be thankful to our heavenly Father for the "words" which He has graciously provided for our use. Let us endeavour, for ourselves, to derive all the advantage intended. Let us also "comfort one another with these words."

6. *By speaking wisely, we may benefit the dying.*— There are, alas! many arriving at the close of life's journey without any well-grounded hope of future blessedness. They have not sought the pardoning and renewing grace of God. We have but a feeble expectation concerning the salvation of those who, "being often reprov'd," have "hardened their neck." But, leaving the results with God, we ought certainly, "as we have opportunity," to speak at once of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." That was a touching incident in the history of Wesleyan Missions in the Zetland Islands, when one of the early converts perished at sea, but spent his last moments in directing a comrade to Christ. The fishing-boat had been driven from land, and, through the violence of the storm, was likely to founder. Friends on the shore could render no assistance, yet through their telescopes could discern all that occurred. One truly pious man was on board. He was evidently engaged in prayer with and for an unconverted companion. This good man had lost a hand, but the stump was raised toward heaven, as though pointing to the Saviour, whose name he was pleading on behalf of the unsaved one,

when a tremendous wave engulfed them, to be seen no more until the sea shall yield up its dead.—As we have opportunity, we must speak to the dying sinner of One who is “able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him.” But it is a happier task to converse with the dying saint concerning the faithfulness of our Lord, and the blessedness of our home. We read: “And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day. For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua, . . . and the people hastened and passed over. And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.” On that day the Israelites greatly needed encouragement. They required to be well assured that the God of Abraham and of Moses was present with them, smiling on their enterprise. The priests were privileged to have something to do with encouraging their brethren. They could not divide the stream. They could not overcome the powerful foes awaiting Israel’s approach. They could not pardon past sin. But they could, in the name of the Lord, and in obedience to His gracious command, sustain the ark of the covenant, so that rank after rank, tribe after tribe, could look on that symbol of the Lord’s presence and power, as they successively traversed the strange path. Thus it is the privilege of Christian

ministers, and of Christian people, to remind the dying saint of "the blood of the everlasting covenant." No mockery of "absolution" must be pronounced. No words which could be mistaken for such "absolution" must be employed, lest the self-deception of a dying sinner should be fostered. Yet we may succeed in so uttering words Divine, that the faithfulness of our God shall be the more clearly discerned by the dying saint. We may thus cheer the pilgrim when crossing Jordan. He who, in a little time, will walk with seraphim amid the glories of the celestial city, may to-day derive comfort from Bible-truth uttered by a stripling.

## CHAPTER VII.

## WORDS SPOKEN BY THOSE AROUND US.

"Take heed what ye hear." (Mark iv. 24.) "Take heed therefore how ye hear." (Luke viii. 18.)

"The man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on crying, 'Life! life! eternal life!'"—PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

BUNYAN, in "the Holy War," represents "Ear-gate" as being justly and universally regarded as of special importance to the town of Mansoul. This was the original design of good King Shaddai, and the gate had therefore been suitably built, adorned, and fortified. Here the giant Diabolus made his subtle oration, when attempting to secure the town for himself. When the vile usurper had unhappily succeeded in his wicked invasion, he bestowed especial care on the keeping of this gate. We read: "And, that Ear-gate might especially be looked to, (for that was the gate in at which the king's forces sought most to enter,) he made one old Mr. Prejudice, an angry and ill-conditioned fellow, captain of that gate; and put under his power sixty men called Deaf-men: men suited for that service, for they minded not the words of the captains, nor of the soldiers." We learn, also, that Boanerges, and the other captains, sent by King Shaddai to recover the



town to its ancient allegiance, directed their especial attention and repeated efforts to this entrance. They were convinced that here the victory must be gained over the cruel and usurping tyrant, and the beneficent and righteous sway of the great king restored. Here, at length, Emmanuel triumphed. "After three or four notable charges by the prince and his noble captains, Ear-gate was broken open, and the bars and bolts with which it was fast shut up against the prince were broken into a thousand pieces. . . . When the prince's forces had broken open the gate, he came and set his throne in it; also he set up his standard hard by, on a mount that was cast up to place the mighty slings thereon. The mount was called Mount Hear-well, and thereon the prince abode."

Now, we who live in this much-lauded nineteenth century have good reason to know that Ear-gate has lost none of its importance. In the war between truth and error, between good and evil, between the good king Shaddai and the wicked tyrant Diabolus, Ear-gate occupies a prominent position. The proper guarding of this entrance is, therefore, a subject of highest importance. In our favoured land we learn nothing by experience of the importance of civic fortifications. The citizens of Chester, York, and a few other places of ancient celebrity, choose to preserve, in whole or in part, their surrounding walls. But the reason why corporations impose and citizens pay the needful levies, is not to secure personal safety, but to retain an ancient distinction. Those

successful traders who, having retired from business, now live at ease outside Micklegate-Bar, feel just as safe from Frenchmen and Russians, as they did when residing within the old walls of Ebor. But they must not be left behind in everything. Places of yesterday, such as Liverpool and Manchester, Leeds and Bradford, Sheffield and Birmingham, may exceed the ancient cities of the realm in wealth and influence; but they have not walls erected around the place where Constantine once held court, whither the Plantagenets were accustomed to resort, and where the warlike nobles of the Red Rose and the White Rose banqueted when victorious, and were beheaded when vanquished. In neighbourhoods where our fathers built no city-walls, we generally attempt nothing of the kind. We seldom go beyond erecting a turnpike-gate, where those who can afford to drive must pay, and poor vagrants who cannot afford to eat are warned they must not beg. This is all the protection deemed needful for ordinary towns. We Englishmen cannot see the use of passports. Why not everybody go where he likes? We decidedly prefer this for ourselves, and are prepared to allow others the same privilege. So long as their fingers meddle not with our personal property, and their feet intrude not on our real estate, we do not wish to be troubled about their migrations. The Continental system appears to us an intolerable interference with free agency; a science invented to give various functionaries, great and small, the opportunity of exacting money, as fees, perquisites,

and gratuities, from unfortunate travellers. We doubt not, that the relaxations which have already taken place will eventually be followed by the entire removal of this annoyance. But, while we should advise all European princes, kings, and emperors to hasten this desirable consummation, we would also advise all people, everywhere, of low degree and high degree, to adopt a modified passport-system in the keeping of Ear-gate.

In regard to this and other entrances to the town of Mansoul, it would be an easy and pleasant rule to admit all comers, trade with everyone, hold friendly intercourse with any who desire it, and derive profit from each. When we are removed to the heavenly country, this will be the mode of keeping Ear-gate. But, though pleasing at first sight, it is not suitable to our present circumstances. Perhaps, as Englishmen, we should not have been so much opposed to the passport-system in our own regulations, if we had not been protected by our insular position and our navy. Had our country been the arena of hostile encounter, like Judæa in those days when Egypt and Syria contended there for supremacy, or the Netherlands in the days of the Great Duke of Marlborough, we might have been convinced of the need of some restriction on comers and goers. If Russians, and Austrians, and Frenchmen had been accustomed, now and then, to march on London, encamp in Hyde-Park, take possession of the Tower, pillage the Bank, extort provisions and money from the householders, and persist in such freaks until our Government

yielded to the demands of their chief, we should, perhaps, have been more fully prepared to submit to any restrictions deemed needful. No doubt, we would rather have free intercourse with everybody.

There is another system which might be adopted for the regulation of this important entrance into Mansoul. This, also, would be marked by great simplicity, though not by equal pleasantness. We might designate it the Chinese system. The rule would be very plain,—to admit none we could exclude. Close the gate, and allow none to enter, unless, by necessity, stratagem, or force, we were constrained to yield. Some persons, as the hermits of olden time, have honestly endeavoured to carry out this system in the protection of Ear-gate. But such conduct would result in our serious damage. We cannot be truly happy and prosperous, while maintaining such isolation. We possess what others need, and others have what we cannot well do without. The Chinese, while regarding themselves as “Celestials,” and the people of all other lands as “Barbarians,” had preserved merely some fossil remains of an imperfect civilization, surrounded by debris of vice and misery beyond what could be found in Africa. The fact is, our position is such, for the present, that we cannot advantageously, or safely, adopt either the English or the Chinese system. In guarding Ear-gate, we must adopt a sort of passport. However much we dislike the Continental system, when travelling among the states of Germany and elsewhere, we shall find something in it worthy of

attention when seeking the welfare of Mansoul. We must neither decree that no foreigner shall be admitted whom we can succeed in excluding, nor that any foreigner may come and go at his pleasure. At suitable times Ear-gate must be wide open. But we must employ a vigilant inspector, and a strong guard. So shall Mansoul both dwell securely and be enriched. A few hints may be useful.

1. *Never willingly admit a known enemy.*—This is far from being a needless caution, although at first sight it may appear to be such. Foes, undisguised, will present themselves at the gate, and will urge such pleas, that, unless the guard be thoroughly faithful, they will succeed in gaining admission. That which was well known to be evil, has, because of its accompaniments, often been welcomed. The foe may bring in his hand that which seems pleasant; or he may address us in words of unusual cheerfulness; or he may try the fascination of a sparkling and pungent wit; or he may be dressed in gorgeous and fashionable attire; or he may offer to amuse our leisure hours; or he may skilfully flatter our weaknesses, prejudice, and vanity; and if, in addition to the attractiveness of his own advances, he happen to have, within the city itself, some plausible associate to plead his cause, it is not unlikely that he will gain an entrance. Thus we find that many are continually admitting into their own minds that which they know to be evil in itself, and calculated to inflict serious injury on them. This remark applies to a large proportion of what is designated “light reading.”

Books known to be mischievous are read, because there is something pleasing in style or otherwise, and because the evil of the book has an accomplice within the heart of the reader. But the same is true of much that is voluntarily listened to. Frequently do persons, who still cherish the hope that they will be found right at last, enter into company, and listen to conversation, of which they cannot approve. There is, however, for the most part, something associated with the evil which serves as a plea for its allowance. Such circles as the half-hearted choose do not often furnish much for the cultivation of the intellect, and they provide nothing for the right training of the heart. But, perhaps, it is hoped that their friendship may be some help to business-success ; some members of the party are cheerful and light-hearted ; one or two possess a sort of wit, which excites laughter ; others have good address ; and some sing or play well. Besides, their companionship is only sought during hours devoted to relaxation. So what is evil in their words and demeanour is borne with. Occasionally, and covertly, scepticism, profanity, impurity, or the caricaturing of vital godliness, is introduced. At all times an interdict is well known to rest against all converse which would minister to Christian edification. Yet, too frequently, persons who are fully convinced of the evil nature and tendency of what they hear will continue to frequent the place, until their moral sense becomes blunted, and their desires for the favour and image of God are lost. From the small and quiet party in the private

parlour, the waverer proceeds to one larger and less select ; then, unhappily, to other and worse places of resort, such as the tavern, the theatre, the card-table, and the race-course. The ruin of many must be attributed to the admission of counsel or enticement, which they knew to be evil, to their ears and heart. We pity those who are thus fatally injured, yet we also condemn them. They knew that the words of pleasing flattery were uttered by the vile tempter, and that it was wrong in them to listen. A young man, whose infancy and childhood were spent amid the comforts, kindness, and comparative refinement of his pious parents' home, hearkens to the voice of those who are leading him astray. He is often deceived, but it is because he is willing to be deceived. By degrees, he is led into practices of intemperance, profanity, licentiousness, or dishonesty. At length he is taught, by sad experience, that "the way of transgressors is hard." Perhaps poverty comes upon him as an armed man ; or he stands convicted of felony, and doomed to penal servitude ; or, in some lone chamber, he endures anguish of body and soul, according to the inspired warning : "Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel ; . . . and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof !" On account of his own sufferings and shame, we lament ; and we feel more deeply still for those aged ones, who, if still living on earth, falteringly cry for help as the iron enters their souls.

This is a sad issue for all their expectations, and toils, and self-denial, and instructions, and prayers. They may still hope that the stern discipline to which that wayward son must now submit will result in his final salvation. But their hearts are stricken. Never again can they regard him with honest pride, and never again can their hopes concerning his honourable usefulness on earth be renewed. Like David of old, they retire to some secret place, there to give expression to overwhelming grief. That young man must be blamed, as well as pitied. He knew that the words to which he so willingly listened were sinful.

We desire to cherish feelings of compassion, and to manifest those feelings, when practicable, toward females who, having been robbed by some selfish villain of their virtue, have been cast upon the world as utterly worthless. While endeavouring, in some few of the workhouses of the land, to make known the mercy of our Redeemer, our heart has grieved over those who were there learning that to forsake God, and cast off His fear, is an evil and bitter thing. The wretch who deceived that young woman with his false and flattering words, promising what he never intended to perform, ought to be banished from all decent society, until he has made all the restitution in his power. Well may the seducer tremble, even though allowed to raise his brow of brass among the wealthy, and gifted, and beautiful, and pure. Such a man has often been surrounded by all comforts, at the very time his victim was awaiting her trial for the murder of her child in the hour of her desperate



grief, or was recklessly destroying herself to hide her shame and misery.

“ Think of her mournfully,  
Gently, and humanly.—  
Who was her father ?  
Who was her mother ?  
Had she a sister ?  
Had she a brother ?—  
Alas for the rarity  
Of Christian charity  
Under the sun !  
O ! it was pitiful,  
Near a whole city full,  
Home she had none !

“ Sisterly, brotherly,  
Fatherly, motherly,  
Feelings had changed :  
Love by harsh evidence  
Thrown from its eminence ;  
Even God’s providence  
Seeming estranged.

“ Where the lamps quiver  
So far in the river,  
With many a light  
From window and casement,  
From garret to basement,  
Houseless by night !

“ The bleak wind of March  
Made her tremble and shiver ;  
But not the dark arch,  
On the black flowing river :  
Mad from life’s history,  
Glad to death’s mystery,  
Swift to be hurl’d  
Anywhere, anywhere,  
Out of the world !

“Picture it, think of it,  
Dissolute man !  
Lave in it, drink of it,  
Then, if you can.”

The followers of the Lord Jesus, more than others, endeavour to snatch the fallen from such a fate, and strive with truest pity to lead such unhappy ones to virtue and to God. But they do not attempt to speak of them, in the language of flattering poetry, as merely unfortunate, and sorrowful, and deceived. There is guilt mingling with their misfortunes, their sorrows, and their errors. That woman, now miserable, listened to words she knew to be sinful, and yielded to enticements she knew to be vile. Never willingly admit those whom you know to be foes. Thus much seems to be clear in the keeping of that important entrance, Ear-gate.

2. *Guard against the practices of enemies who enter without your consent.*—On market-days, and during other periods of general business, there are frequently such crowds of people, thronging the principal gates of a city, as render careful supervision impracticable. If the commercial transactions are not to be impeded, individuals must be allowed freely to enter and depart. Those who might easily be detected in a time of leisure, and excluded as foes, will, most likely, now pass unchallenged. Good Néhemiah, when Jerusalem was rising from its ruins, excluded aliens on the Sabbath-day. The men of Tyre meant no harm, beyond selling their fish ; but Nehemiah would not have them near the gates during the sacred

hours. He tells us, "It came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath : and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the Sabbath-day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall ? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath." But, although Nehemiah succeeded in keeping the gates shut during the holy day, it is doubtful whether he ever had it in his power on other days to exclude the emissaries of Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the other determined adversaries of Jerusalem and its governor.—Now, it is a great mercy that on the Sabbath-day we can generally prevent that which is evil from entering in at Ear-gate. While joining in the songs of Zion, or prostrate before the mercy-seat, or listening to the reading of holy Scripture, or hearing a gospel sermon, or catechizing and instructing our children, we may generally ward off the approach of evil words. Certainly, our social intercourse needs, even on that day, to be carefully guarded ; but, as we can for the most part select our associates, and limit the time spent in their company, we need not receive harm. But during the business-days of the week we cannot prevent enemies from entering at Ear-

gate ; and the only question is, By what means may we best guard against their mal-practices? Evil words were often heard by the blessed Master Himself. Paul, and Peter, and John, could not avoid hearing when the name of their Divine Lord was blasphemed. Early believers, who dwelt at Sardis and elsewhere, were unable to close their ears against wicked words which sorely grieved their hearts. How can we prevent the mischief to which we are exposed? We must restrict, as far as possible, the admission of enemies. Lot did wrong, and greatly suffered, by going to dwell in Sodom. The richness of the pasture-lands was no sufficient reason for risking his own spiritual welfare, with that of his wife and his daughters. When among the abandoned sinners, his soul was vexed from day to day in seeing and hearing their vile words and deeds. But there was really no need for exposure to such suffering and peril. Alien foes would not have trooped into Ear-gate in any such manner, if Lot's covetousness had not caused him to pitch his tent toward Sodom.

Further: we must take a decided stand for God. In our conduct we must allow of no vacillation, and nothing like the appearance of it. Everyone must know, that, if the vagrants succeed in entering, it is not because we have invited them, or purpose to entertain them. We must look well to it, that they do not abide within us. We must treat them as a good man quaintly advises us to treat all forms of Satanic temptation: "The devil may come in without your leave; but, if you don't offer him a

stool, he will soon leave you." So we must take heed that we never cherish those impressions which evil words are calculated to produce. It is of the utmost importance that we should seek the entire sanctification of our hearts, so that there may be no place of shelter within us for the foe. The assaults of the wicked one were, in the case of our blessed Redeemer, entirely ineffectual, because there was no evil in the Son of God. Our greatest peril arises from evil within. We read, that, when Jerusalem was at length taken by the Romans, Titus gave strict charge that the temple should be preserved on account of its wondrous adornment and beauty. A soldier, however, cast a torch through a window, and the flames thus kindled could not be extinguished until the vast and gorgeous building was consumed. The fact affords abundant evidence that there must have been a very large amount of inflammable materials employed in its construction and fittings. A hundred torches might be cast on the floor of some of our cathedrals, and no lasting damage done to the fabric. Hewn stone, marble, and gold, would not readily be consumed by a mere firebrand.—The temple of our hearts will enjoy a blessed degree of security, when all evil has been removed. Until then, the expression of another person's covetousness, envy, pride, sensuality, anger, may prove exceedingly injurious. A fire may be kindled, which will do extensive and irreparable damage. A whole heart for Christ, and we shall be comparatively safe. Then may we hope for a blessedness like that which

is pronounced concerning the faithful few in Sardis: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy."

3. *Carefully scrutinize the credentials of those who seek to become residents.*—Aliens may be permitted to enter the city, and transact business in the public market, and depart when the day is drawing to a close, without any great risk to the commonwealth. But, when wily and untiring foes abound, it is not safe to allow such to settle in the place. Now, it so happens, that, in a large part of the conversation around us, there are principles assumed which are both false and exceedingly mischievous. These are not formally announced as contrary to the teaching of holy Scripture, or the general opinion of Christian people. It is assumed that they are correct, and they are quietly taken for granted. This unobtrusive assumption is dangerous to the inexperienced and the partially informed. It is not unnatural that we should adopt an opinion which those around us take for granted. No doubt, many of our views which are thoroughly correct, and which will bear the tests of Scripture, experience, and eternity, are thus gained. But, inasmuch as we are liable to be deceived, it is well to examine our opinions most carefully. The inspired historian of the early Christian church tells us of some who carefully compared what they heard, even from the lips of Paul and Silas, with the ancient Scriptures,

before they placed implicit confidence therein ; and the writer commends the conduct of those careful hearers. The Bereans "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so."—It is not unfrequently assumed by worldly men that attention to the externals of religion will prove sufficient to secure the favour of God during this present life, and a share in the blessedness of the unseen world. Many among these formalists would shrink from an explicit avowal that they believed a religion of mere outside show would suffice. But they and their friends take it for granted ; and their children, growing up among those who are satisfied with the form of godliness, and influenced by the carnality of their own minds, readily admit the same false and fatal error. They wilfully forget that fair apparel will not impart vitality to a corpse ; and that the mere gilding of base metal will not transmute it into gold. If sincere inquirers after truth, they would bring these vague notions, and the false security they yield, to the unerring standard : "I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Incorrect notions are also quietly assumed in reference to church-membership, and the profession of discipleship. Many take it for granted, that they have been left, by the Head of the church, to make a profession of religion or not, as shall be deemed by themselves

most convenient. They are not prepared to maintain any such opinion from the teaching of the New Testament; but they have practically adopted it. If assailed with plain texts, they would most likely yield their views until they could get rid of their unwelcome instructor, and would then reclaim their favourite notion. Many who would resent the declaration, "You are living in habitual neglect of the command of the Lord Jesus," are accustomed to say, almost boastingly, "I make no profession of religion." They take some little credit to themselves for not being numbered with any section of the church of Christ. Now, this being the prevailing feeling in many circles, thousands of young persons are constantly trained to regard the profession of religion and church-membership as quite optional, and not imperative. When persons become thoroughly in earnest to approve themselves to the Lord Jesus, they bring this notion to the standard. Now, certainly, none of Christ's servants have authority to compel their fellow-disciples to follow with them. The Lord Jesus rebuked such an attempt. Paul and Barnabas separated; but there was no denunciation uttered by either. The figment of apostolic succession should, in our days, be placed among nursery-tales, and legends concerning King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and the exploits of the Seven Champions of Christendom. But, most assuredly, the New Testament teaches us that it is our duty to make and hold fast a profession of religion, even though we should suffer the loss of worldly goods, and



of life itself.—In many worldly circles it is assumed that gloom and unhappiness are necessarily associated with true religion. This is not proved. No attempt is made to prove it. But it is taken for granted. Young people who know little or nothing of Christian experience, except from report, are, of course, liable to fall into the prevailing error. This is the more likely to occur, as they clearly perceive that, if religious, they would have to renounce many practices which they account essential to their happiness. True, indeed, that among the true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ there is less of merriment, and more of earnestness. But is merry-making essential to happiness? and is the activity of the soul really opposed to its blessedness? Granted, also, that many places of resort where worldlings hope to find delight have to be forsaken when the service of God is begun, and that much of the delight experienced by His saints is beyond the comprehension of the carnal mind. But do the polluted streams really satisfy? and is not the happiness of believers abiding? We read in our unerring directory: "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. . . . Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts." We have no hesitancy in appealing to the experience of those who

have known much concerning "the Fountain of living waters," and also concerning the "broken cisterns," whether they now enjoy the smile of God, or are, unhappily, far from Him. If happiness could be correctly estimated, it would often appear that the godly man, whose gravity has amused a laughter-loving group, has had more heartfelt joy that day, than has fallen to the lot of his satirists, unitedly, in the entire month.—The erroneous notions just hinted at may serve to represent a host of others, which insinuate into heedless minds, because they are taken for granted among those who are constantly talking in our presence. We must be on our guard against foes who would now quietly enter Ear-gate, assuming the position of rightful citizens, and would, at a future time, work our injury and ruin. Let us scrutinize their credentials, and compare them with our infallible directory.

4. *Greatly prize those who are manifestly true friends.*  
—It is in order to secure the advantages which these can confer, that we allow of a large intercourse with the world beyond our walls. Otherwise we might be disposed to adopt the Chinese system, as did some pious but mistaken men in the earlier ages of the Christian era. We might incline to be anchorets, but for the hope of getting good, and, perhaps, doing a little. We must long for a cottage in the wilderness, but for the conviction that we could not there perform the tasks assigned to us by the Great Master, or receive all the blessings He intends for our use. As, then, the gate is kept open, and great risk

incurred, chiefly for the reception of true friends, we ought certainly to welcome them, and make the most of them.

The inspired writer of proverbs suggests another illustration, when, teaching the value of true wisdom, he says, "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." We are to search for wisdom as for precious metals. Men have been known, in mining-districts, to bore, one week after another, one month after another, in search of coal or ironstone, tin or lead. Their tools wrought through various strata, but did not reach the desired mineral. They long toiled through that which was worthless to them, and sometimes detected the presence of what might prove injurious, but found not the prize they sought. If, however, at length they discovered rich veins of mineral, containing what they had been long searching for, they deemed themselves fully compensated for their arduous and protracted toil. You might depend on their working those veins thoroughly. Cornish miners have penetrated beneath the bed of the sea to a great distance. They have fearlessly extended their galleries and passages under the rough waves of the Atlantic, and have from thence borne away long-concealed treasures. The mighty waters have been held back by protecting piles, so far advanced that at high tide the works were surrounded by the turbulent waves: yet

there a shaft has been sunk ; and from thence treasure, to the value of many thousands of pounds, had been extracted, when a ship was unfortunately driven against the barriers, and the waves, rushing in at the breach, regained their ancient dominion.—These are examples of the manner in which men search for “hid treasures.” Thus are we to prize the words of the truly wise. The discourse of such, being permeated by Divine truth, abounds with that wisdom which is beyond all price. Let us often place ourselves where words of heavenly wisdom may be heard. Gold is chiefly found in grains ; truth is generally to be obtained only by patient effort. If a sermon could be composed so as to declare all needful truth, it would be in little request, because of our incapacity. Even in the mines of holy Scripture the Lord has stored it up in grains, as most suitable to our capacity and circumstances. The diligent worker will find each day what is needed for the day. Hearken patiently then to sermons, and to statements concerning Christian life, and to the remarks of mature disciples in social converse, wherein the fine gold of the kingdom may be discerned, if only in grains. Receive with grateful readiness all words of heavenly wisdom.—Your counsellor may be stern in manner. This is unfortunate. But a sign-post is not to be valued chiefly because it has been newly painted, but because it imparts correct information. He may come with a rebuke. Well, if you need such a message, that which is to be lamented is your condition. I may be pitied because grievous maladies render

bitter draughts needful ; but I must not blame my physician because in that case he does not bring me dainties.—Many of our wisest friends are unpolished. This is to be regretted. But, if driving along a dangerous lane in a dark night, you would not decline the direction given by a labouring man because his speech was provincial ; and if during daylight you had carelessly fallen into a ditch, you would not refuse the aid proffered by the rudest ploughman. Though trained by no “posture-master,” he appears to have a strong arm and a kind heart. He is, therefore, just the man for you in your emergency.—Turn to practical account the words of heavenly wisdom which you hear. A young tradesman, struggling for a footing in the business-world, endeavours to put to some use every sovereign he can acquire. The coin may be a very bright one, and thoroughly genuine, yet it will be of no service while shut up in the desk. The man has a place for every pound. We may accumulate axioms until in the mental world we are very millionaires, and yet derive no real benefit from our stores. We must employ, as well as acquire. Put every golden maxim to some use.

## THE CORRECT ESTIMATE OF OUR OWN WORDS.

A YOUTHFUL artist, who is engaged on his first painting intended for exhibition at some Academy, regards it as of great importance that he should form a correct estimate of his work while it is proceeding. He places his canvas in the best light that he can command. Perhaps some diminutive attic in the back part of the house forms the studio of the future master. But the painter avails himself of whatever

advantages it offers. Then, during the lengthened task, the yet unfinished picture is often taken down and placed in other lights, so that the anxious aspirant after fame may not be deceived concerning it. At the twilight-hour, some of his associates may, now and then, intrude upon his laborious solitude, and inspect his work. Amid that dim light, some may overlook its defects, and pronounce it to be super-excellent, and predict that their friend will eclipse alike the Pre-Raphaelites and their opponents. Others may overlook the beauties of the unfinished painting, and advise him to fling away the pencil, and betake himself to the counter. But the young artist well knows that criticism formed in that hasty manner, and in that imperfect light, whether favourable or otherwise, is worth little. For himself, he has sometimes indulged in hopes far brighter, and at other times yielded to discouragement more complete, than any of his friends suggest. But he wants to look at his work, while it is proceeding, with a discrimination similar to that which it must encounter when completed. How will it be regarded by the judges when placed for their inspection in the gallery? Defects, if now discovered, may possibly be remedied. But it will be too late to make the picture what it should be, when it has been publicly condemned. Hence the unfinished performance is set in various lights, and compared with the best models at command; and the artist invites the criticism of friends on whose judgment he can rely, and ponders the censures of those whom he knows

to be severe, and employs all possible methods of ascertaining the merits and faults of his workmanship. He dreads being put to shame in the hour of inspection; and hopes that, by doing his best, and guarding against self-deception, and rectifying each error, he may gain distinction, fame, and wealth. —Now, the vast importance of human conduct, including speech, appears most clearly, when viewed in the light streaming from the eternal world. Our present position is one of unutterable solemnity. When once the period of our probation has terminated, we shall have no opportunity for rectifying what is evil. A misspent life will prove an everlasting loss. Hence we have reason to desire that clear light should now be thrown upon the workmanship in which we are engaged. If there are flaws, it will be best for us that they be now detected. We need not care very much how our performances are now viewed by the thoughtless and the prejudiced; but we ought to be concerned to ascertain how they will be regarded by the Divine Judge in the great day. Every means of obtaining such knowledge ought to be carefully and assiduously employed. “Examine yourselves. Prove your own selves.” “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” There was love toward the Saviour in the hearts of His disciples, James and John, as they burned with indignation against the villagers who would not allow the Great Teacher



to abide among them for the night, because they surmised that He was journeying toward the Jewish metropolis, and that he preferred Zion to Gerizim. But the sons of Zebedee were greatly mistaken if they supposed that their zeal was free from unholy passion. They were met with the gentle rebuke, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." May we so judge, and so live, as to find acceptance in the great day!

1. *We must obtain a thorough acquaintance with the teachings of holy Scripture.*—Much has been said of late concerning an inner light in man, independent of Divine revelation, or of instruction by wise teachers; which, it is alleged, avails to lead to true knowledge, and purity, and happiness. How much did this inner light do for the Assyrians and Babylonians, the Egyptians and Persians, the Carthaginians and Gauls, or even for the Greeks and Romans, of ancient days? Where can we find the biography, or the writings, or any memorial of the men who were thus led by the inner light to true blessedness? The vaunted theory assumes that the boon belongs to man as man. It is said to exist everywhere; yet nowhere has it proved influential. What had it done for China and India, for Africa and Fiji, when the era of modern Christian Missions happily commenced? Doubtless, notwithstanding the dire results of the first transgression, men possess a capability of knowing, loving, obeying, and enjoying God. Otherwise a direct revelation would be useless. But of this we are also sure, that men,

if left without the blessed Book and the gracious Spirit of God, are never led by any inner light to their Great Original. Those who, unhappily, possess not the unerring standard of faith and practice, or refuse to refer to it, may still retain a notion of moral obligation. "*I ought*," "*He ought*," are phrases quite familiar in human language. But this notion of obligation, when not directed by a Divine law, becomes perverted and distorted, so as even to aggravate the evils of human conduct. When the unerring standard is unknown or discarded, men allow their own evil propensities to form a standard. The solemn "*I ought*," which has been written so deeply within the human heart that nothing can quite erase it, has been one day employed to enforce the drinking of water in which a Brahmin's foot had been washed, but oftener to sanction deeds of injustice, idolatry, impurity, and murder. The carnal mind obtains from a perverted notion of obligation new impetus and vigour. Pride, or self-will, or lust, or rage, holds up its head higher, and more unblushingly, than it could otherwise have done; and strikes with a heavier hand. The determination, "*I ought*," has a mightier, and too often a more injurious, power, than the mere "*I will*" could have commanded. Saul of Tarsus, when vainly supposing himself to be doing God service, went beyond anything he could have dared to attempt in his own service. Several of the Roman emperors, who were comparatively mild in the maintenance of their own claims, employed the utmost severity against those who were

accused of being enemies of the gods of Rome. In ancient and modern heathendom, the vilest wickedness has been sanctioned within the temples by those who would not have tolerated it in their own dwellings. Among the priests of Rome who have presided in the chambers of the Inquisition, there have, doubtless, been men who would willingly have endured much to relieve suffering anywhere else. The unhappy Queen Mary, of England, sought not to fill her own coffers, or ensure her personal gratification, by the fires at Oxford, and Smithfield, and elsewhere.—No inner light will suffice to regulate human conduct. The consciousness of obligation renders the Bible more needful than ever. The solemn "*I ought*" requires a guiding Oracle of superhuman wisdom. We shall neither act aright, nor speak aright, unless we submit to the Divine light. A partial acquaintance with sacred teaching, such as even the careless among us generally possess, may serve to restrain conscientiousness from perpetrating dreadful blunders like those we have just referred to. But, if our conduct and converse are to be always rightly directed, we must have a large and correct acquaintance with the word of God. That our lips may utter right words, our hearts must be well stored with heavenly thoughts. That good things, new and old, may be brought forth, the treasury within must first be enriched from on high. The standard must ever be nigh, and we must have a holy aptitude in using it. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."

2. *Frequently refer to the authorized standard.*—

When the first temple was to be built on Zion, directions were given that every stone and beam should be accurately prepared for its place, so that no sound of axe or hammer might be heard during the actual erection. Of course, each artisan would need explicit directions concerning the portion of the work committed to him. It would also be of the utmost importance that he should often refer to the directions given. One of the simplest forms of labour would be that in which a number of men were engaged in the quarries among the hills of Sidon, cutting out stones resembling each other in size. If a workman trusted to eye and hand, it is probable he would fail so far that his workmanship, when tested, would prove unfit for its place, and he would suffer shame and loss. His error might be copied by others, and every departure from the right repeated and multiplied. If the workmen, generally, laid aside the directions given to them, and each compared his work with that of his fellows, their mistakes would be both numerous and serious.—In the regulation of human conduct, our peril is the greater. The men who were employed in hewing timber and preparing it, in procuring stones from the quarries and squaring them, would endeavour, however foolishly self-confident, to reduce the material intrusted to them to the required size and shape. But, as to morals, there is, in human nature, a lamentable tendency toward that which is evil. We have, therefore, in these matters, a special reason

for constantly referring to the standard. We must not only become acquainted with the teachings of God's blessed Book, but must daily test our actions and words by a reference to that Book. "We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." My workmanship may be commended by those whose views are deficient; it may look very well when placed side by side with some other of my own performances; it may bear comparison with the efforts of some others; it may be regarded by myself with considerable complacency; and yet it may prove to be fatally deficient. Wherever the unerring standard has been neglected, a rapid and grievous deterioration has taken place. There have been manifest defectiveness and error, both in views and in practice.

The standard was found by the Romish priesthood to be exceedingly inconvenient, because it claimed a universal authority, and would not bend to suit the evil inclinations and sinful doings of any. It was as unyielding in the hands of cardinal and bishop, as in those of peasant or serf. It claimed jurisdiction in the episcopal palace as well as in the mud-walled cottage. It presented one law of eternal truth, rectitude, purity, and love, for all. It was deemed objectionable, also, because so readily applied. The speculations of heathen philosophers and scholastic divines, if somewhat strict, might

generally be allowed to go abroad unguarded, because they would not be readily understood, and therefore not easily applied to the prevalent abuses of the ruling classes. But the words of God's Book came right home to the hearts and consciences of all men. Here were oracles which admitted no ambiguity, and flattered neither the mighty nor the multitude. Here were found recorded the words of Him who spake as One having authority, and not as the Scribes; whom the common people heard gladly, and concerning whom His foes bore testimony, "Never man spake like this Man." Here were the words of those ancient prophets who used to shake the hearts of kings and of people, as they delivered their solemn message prefaced with the declaration, "Thus saith the Lord." Here words might be read which had been first uttered by men commissioned to preach the Gospel to every creature. In their teaching there was no imitation of the esoteric and exoteric of heathen philosophy. They proclaimed glad tidings to every creature. A work had to be done which required not concealment or reserve, but the manifestation of the truth to every man's conscience. Every man who read the Book must learn that it was the will of its Divine Author that all men should read it, and submit to it as an unerring guide, and the only unerring guide in faith and practice. No wonder, therefore, that those who are determined to walk in the crooked ways of sin turn away from the Bible, lest their own consciences should be troubled; or that those who desire to rule with arbitrary sway within the consciences of others endeavour to conceal

the Bible, lest men should be taught to resist their usurpation.

Systems of human formation have been provided, and eagerly received, among the Jews, throughout the vast regions acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope, within the wide limits of the Greek Church, in Mohammedan countries, and elsewhere. The results have ever been disastrous. The unerring standard being removed, men have become wicked, and wicked men have waxed worse and worse. Comparing themselves with themselves, they became vain and foolish.—If we would regulate our conduct aright, we must often refer to the infallible directory. We must not be content to talk as other people talk, or as our associates would have us talk. Day by day must we inquire within our own hearts, Are we employing our lips according to the Divine will? In the Bible we find sufficient direction how to speak in the temple, and in the market; when joyous, and when sorrowful; among the disciples of Jesus, and among the ungodly; when surrounded by mere acquaintances, or by the members of our own family; concerning the affairs of earth, or those of heaven. What we need is a disposition constantly to refer to the standard, and to act accordingly.

3. *Let us seek counsel at the mercy-seat.*—During the brighter days of Israel's history, the people were favoured with much of the guidance of their God. The priests were allowed to ask direction from the Most High, and to impart the desired information. We cannot fully explain the manner, but the fact is recorded. Soothsayers in Egypt, Persia, Babylon,

Greece, and Rome, pretended to have intercourse with supernatural powers, and thus to gain possession of secrets belonging to the future and the unseen. It presents human nature in a humiliating aspect, to think of mighty emperors, and attendant legions, and whole nations, anxiously waiting until some self-deceived or juggling priest observed the flight of birds, or examined the entrails of some slaughtered beast; or to read of embassies sent to Delphos, or other sacred place, to inquire, from a raving woman in whom the maniac and impostor were curiously blended, what would be the result of a war, the termination of a monarch's sickness, or the fate of an endangered empire. The responses given by these heathen oracles were sometimes cunningly ambiguous; at other times, entirely meaningless; and frequently, when a distinct utterance was ventured on, altogether false. At best, the response was useless, often injurious, occasionally fatal. It is pleasing to pass from the counterfeit to the real, as it existed in Jewry during the days of various righteous judges and kings. The circulation of base coin indicates that coin of sterling worth does exist somewhere; and the contrast between the two makes the value of the genuine more apparent. Thus we read that the Israelites, in the days of Samuel, "inquired of the Lord" concerning the king who was to reign over them, and the response which they received from the Divine Oracle was distinct and true. At Keilah David "inquired of the Lord" whether he should attempt to drive back the Philistine marauders who



were accustomed to rob the farmers of the fruits of their land,—whether he should be successful in the attempt,—and, afterwards, whether Saul would pursue him thither, and the citizens prove base enough to deliver up their deliverer. In all these cases, and in others, David obtained sufficient direction from God. In reading some sections of Hebrew history, we become familiar with the expression, “*inquired of the Lord.*”—Now, we believe that there is a happy sense in which we have still the privilege of ascertaining the will of God at the mercy-seat. Our directory is the Book of God, but the teachings of that blessed Book are to be explained, brought to our recollection, and applied to our particular necessities, by the Divine Spirit. There is yet a voice, proceeding from between the cherubim, which responds to those who ask aright. That voice is not now discernible to the outward ear, as sometimes in ancient days. But it is heard. Often do men, holding the Bible in their hands, grievously err, because they do not pray that He who first inspired that word may shed light on the open page. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.” “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” “The anointing which ye have received

of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." It is especially when we are at the mercy-seat that the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us. Let the question be, Am I in the habit of using my lips according to the Divine will? I may have become familiar with the teachings of God's Book, and may apply that standard as a test of my talking, and yet not be fully instructed. Sufficient direction has been given in the holy Scriptures; and yet it may escape my investigation, unless I ask the aid of the blessed Spirit who inspired it. There may be flaws in my conduct, which, notwithstanding all my scrutiny, will remain undiscerned, unless light from heaven be poured thereon. Unconsciously, I may have allowed my mind to be drawn away from the perfect model furnished in the history of our Lord, and to be engrossed with the examples of some of my fellow-servants, in which much of mere glitter and tinsel mingles with the fine gold; and I shall continue to copy those faulty models, and so form an incorrect estimate of myself, unless the gracious Spirit interpose on my behalf. We have much need, in reference to our speaking, as also to every other branch of Christian duty, to inquire of the Lord. We must get away from the noise of self, in its pride, covetousness, anxieties, and peevishness, and, in the quiet of devotion, wait upon the Lord, and listen for the Divine response.

4. *The advice of judicious friends must be prized.*—A true friend will not flatter. Such a friend has been compared to a mirror. Through his assistance we may make new discoveries concerning ourselves. I do not know that a mirror often flatters : by its aid we can certainly discern our features. Painters often flatter those whom they undertake to represent on canvas. Wrinkles are considerably diminished. Eyes are made more expressive. Features are distinguished by a fresh beauty, and regularity, and dignity. Though friends admire the talent that has been displayed, they are sure that the portrait is a flattery ; and the person chiefly concerned secretly thinks so himself. Artists probably find that a little imaginative adorning, thus superadded, is well received, though, perhaps, protested against. The fault of such artists may admit of some extenuation.—More culpable are those who, for their own selfish purposes, flatter men who are living in sin. Some endeavour to make large capital of their flattering words. They seem to have adopted the maxim, Flatter all from whom you can gain anything. Such smooth-tongued dissemblers often pretend to be warmly-attached friends. But they pervert the sacred name of friendship. All who flatter can forsake, and many of them can wound. Those friends are to be prized who are as a good mirror.

A true friend will not needlessly give pain. Some of our acquaintances are like defective mirrors. The surface of the glass is not even ; and the face of the person looking therein appears too long, or too broad,

according to the position in which the mirror is held. And there are ill-natured people who find a strange pleasure in discovering and proclaiming the defects of others. These are both backbiters and face-biters. They slander you when absent, and insult you when present, and pride themselves on their fidelity. They need to be reminded that no good will result from a pretended exposure of faults which have no existence beyond their own imagination, and that defects which cannot be remedied may better be passed over in silence. I would sooner be a painting in which lines of beauty and of grace unknown to the original had been introduced, than I would be a bit of crooked glass giving needless offence to everybody who consulted me.

Yet, no doubt, great advantage may result from a faithful yet kindly disclosure of faults which admit of correction. We have reason to be thankful to those who will admonish us, at the risk of incurring our displeasure. We read in one of the Apocryphal books, "If a skilful man hear a wise word, he will commend it, and add unto it; but as soon as one of no understanding heareth it, it displeaseth him, and he casteth it behind his back." In order that we may have the opportunity of hearing those "wise words" which displease the self-satisfied, and are prized by the prudent, we must treat our friends properly. If you approach a good mirror, and breathe on it, you will not, for some time, discern with clearness your features reflected therein. So we may forfeit the admonitions of those who are desirous to do us

good, and are able to do so. If we receive a kindly suggestion angrily, impatiently, or even with indifference, it is probable that it may not be repeated.

5. *Profit by the censures of those who are prejudiced against us.*—In the statements made to our disadvantage there is much, doubtless, that is incorrect; and yet we may learn from them something valuable. At any rate, it may be prudent to inquire carefully into the matters suggested. This is the more important if I discover that, while the censures assume various and fantastic forms of error, there is some ground common to most of them. The thought must then arise in a candid mind, Have not these observers, prejudiced as they are, discovered some error in my conduct? Otherwise, how should they agree in regard to certain particulars? Much is evidently untrue; but what about those charges in which they all agree? Some, perhaps, affirm that what I say is not always kind; others, that I endeavour to please everybody; others, that my remarks have seldom any weight in them; others, that I always talk as though I were a philosopher: but, though their censures are various, and in some respects contradictory one to another, they all agree in the insinuation that I talk too much. Now, it may not be profitable to consider each and all of the whispers which come to my ear; but I ought not to allow that to pass unexamined in which the deponents agree. I ought seriously to inquire, Am I guilty of immoderate loquaciousness? Hawkestone-Park, the seat of the noble and ancient family of the Hills, of Shropshire,

furnishes a most interesting scene for a holiday's explorations. At one point of the extensive grounds, you are conducted by the guide into a subterranean grotto of considerable extent. In some parts you follow him along narrow passages, without one ray of light; and in others you are lost in admiration at the beautiful manner in which a well-lighted cavern has been ornamented with innumerable shells and fossils. At one time the timid of the group feel some dread as they indistinctly perceive a mysterious figure gliding at a distance among pillars which support the roof, themselves roughly hewn out of the living rock; and at another time they look on the companions with whom they entered the cavern, now standing beneath the discoloured light from the roof, which gives to their features a hue indescribably ghastly. Few would care to look on those they love by that light. Where the windings of the cavern approach the side of an extensive and lovely valley, a window has been formed, with glass of various colours inserted. Through none of the diminutive panes can you obtain a correct view of what lies beyond, but through each you catch an indistinct view. The colours have been so selected, that, as you look successively through the panes, you perceive somewhat of the valley under the different aspects of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The spectator can discern nothing so clearly as he would were he standing in the open air, or even looking through ordinary glass. Yet he can describe the valley, and the opposite slopes, and the trees on their summits,

as he could not have done if he had never visited Hawkestone. Nay, he knows more about that valley than a person would do, who, with closed eyes, had stood in its very midst. Any careful observer, after looking through each coloured pane, and marking what was common to all, would be able to give some fair account of the valley.—Do not always dismiss the censures of those whom you know to be prejudiced against you, with the remark, that he who looks through yellow spectacles sees all things yellow. So he does. Yet I may, if wise, gather from the testimony of those who look at me through coloured glass some information which may be turned to good account.

6. *By defects perceived in others, let us be admonished concerning ourselves.*—Every year thousands of our countrymen visit Paris. We are thankful that the occasions of their going thither are now of peaceful character. We would much rather have them represent firms in London and Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield, and elsewhere, buying and selling to mutual advantage, than go to repeat the conflicts of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, ensuring universal loss. But let us suppose that a young man is about to pay his first visit to the French metropolis. We have nothing to do with his business there; but he expects to hold intercourse with very refined people, and with some who are rather captious. He learned French a long time ago. Monsieur, his teacher, assured him that he spoke it like a native, and even with the Parisian accent. He once took a trip to

Boulogne, chiefly to try his French. During that fortnight he got on swimmingly. The waiters evidently understood him at once, bowed politely, and replied without delay. The peasantry at whose doors he loitered and chatted made no remarks indicative that they were amused at his manner of speaking. Shopmen never smiled at his inquiries. There was no doubt that he spoke French as though he had been born within sight of Notre Dame. But, just before he starts for Paris, he is thrown into the society of some educated Frenchmen, and converses with them in our own English. The young man cannot fail to observe that his friends, when speaking, would be easily known as foreigners. Some of them are at times almost unintelligible, while others have merely a foreign accent; but none of them speak English exactly as an Englishman would. What lesson must the young man learn from this interview? No gentleman would think of ridiculing a foreigner, or even of thinking contemptuously of him, because he was unable to speak English correctly. But the young man might learn the necessity of paying a little extra attention to his own French. The blunders of his foreign friends, when speaking English, suggest the possibility that his speaking French like a native may be only a pleasing fiction invented for the comfort of credulous pupils; and that the young ladies at Boulogne, and some young gentlemen whom he met there, have since then occasionally drawn from his French their evening's fun. Might it not be profitable to call to mind those peculiarities which

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are known to be most tenacious, and then go through a few extra drills, especially as, during his anticipated visit, he may see he knows not how many of great folk and people exquisite? He would thus be a gainer, without making any unkind use of the imperfections of his friends.—So, when we are compelled to observe that some, whom in other respects we greatly esteem, are in their mode of speaking hasty, complaining, uncourteous, or otherwise defective, let us, knowing that we are naturally predisposed to similar evils, examine our own speech the more carefully. We may, through grace, be endeavouring to set our affections on things which are above; yet let us not always take it for granted that we speak the language of the New Jerusalem like a resident citizen. Some of those around me are, like myself, hoping one day to ascend the hill of Zion, and to enter in through the gates into the city. Yet, occasionally, a careful listener can detect that they speak like those who were born in Egypt, and have dwelt some time there. Well, the language of the heavenly Canaan is not my native speech, any more than it is theirs. There are some accents of the old country, the land of idolatry and bondage, which are very tenacious. Am I rid of them? Some parts of the celestial language it is difficult to acquire. Have I mastered those? Certainly, I can discern defects in others: do I speak as one whose citizenship is in heaven?

## CHAPTER IX.

## ELEMENTS OF POWER IN SPEAKING.

“How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?” (Job vi. 25.)

“If the preaching of the Gospel is to exercise a great power over mankind, it must be either by enlisting extraordinary men, or by *the endowing of ordinary men with extraordinary power.*”—THE TONGUE OF FIRE.

Soon after Napoleon the First had been conveyed in a British ship-of-war to his prison-home in the rocky isle of St. Helena, it was deemed needful to impress in a forcible manner on the mind of the Dey of Algiers that it was highly improper in him and his subjects to steal Christian men and women, and then sell them as slaves. A small expedition, under the command of Lord Exmouth, was fitted and sent to Algiers for this purpose. The lesson was effectively taught, and the slavery of white Christians brought to an end. In accomplishing this desirable object, Great Britain did not suppose it needful to put forth all her strength, or even any very considerable portion thereof. But when, twelve years before, the French fleet in part recovered from the disastrous overthrow at the Nile, and, united with the naval forces of Spain, were preparing to dispute the

maritime supremacy of Britain, and destroy her commerce, it was needful that the entire resources of this land should be employed to prevent so dire a catastrophe. Every effort was put forth, that Nelson, whenever and wherever he might meet with the combined fleets, should be able to withstand, and, if possible, defeat them. The supremacy of the British flag on the ocean was fully maintained at Trafalgar, October 21st, 1805. Though Britain's naval hero fell on that day, her foes were overthrown, and her commerce was secured. On the morning of that memorable and dreadful fight, Nelson well knew that he had need of all the resources which had been committed to him. The question in his mind was, How can I most effectually employ these ships for the destruction of yon combined and powerful fleet? His genius and courage were employed by the almighty Disposer of events to solve that difficult problem.—The solemn and urgent question which presses continually upon the militant servants of Christ is, How shall the supremacy of our Lord be restored throughout this rebellious and perishing world? To Him belongs the right to reign. In Him centre the hopes of a sinful and sorrowful race. But myriads of hearts are, unhappily, closed against Him. How shall these be overcome? We long to see the banner of our Lord waving in peaceful triumph everywhere. How shall this be effected? The church of Christ has need to put forth its utmost efforts. We must make the most of the resources which have been committed to our charge. As our

Divine Head has been pleased to ordain that words rightly spoken should have an important part in our world's deliverance, we do well to inquire how our words may be most effectual. What are the elements of power in speaking?

But a preliminary inquiry presents itself. Is not the power exerted by the words of ungodly men often over-estimated? One instance may be cited for examination. During the earlier stages of that revolution by which Louis XVI. was eventually hurled from his throne, and put to death on the scaffold, great power seemed to be exercised by various men who successively gained the public ear. The orator who fought his way to the Tribune, and from thence harangued the assembled crowd, inciting the people to disregard all temperate counsel, appeared to sway the masses at his will. Must we not look upon such men as angels of darkness, ruling the storm in its awful power? Were not they possessed of more than human energies? We think not. What great thing did they accomplish by their fiery orations? It certainly does not require the mind and hand of a genius to kindle up a blaze amid materials already prepared. Samson knew better than that. Foxes tied together in pairs, tail by tail, so that they might not escape too speedily, proved quite equal to their task. All that was needed was that they should run hither and thither with the firebrands. Devastation soon spread among the shocks and the standing corn, the vineyards and the olives. So, when the last century was drawing

to a close, mob-orators in France succeeded in fanning the flames which had been kindled in the unhappy country. But when these same men wished to guide the extending fires, so as to serve their purpose, and no other, they discovered that they were entirely unequal to that task. They could not even so direct the flame as to ensure the safety of their own homes and persons. Many of them miserably perished, in the vain attempt to control its course, or limit its ravages. It blazed in all directions, and caused myriads to tremble who had rejoiced at its kindling. The aristocracy, the parish-priests, the landed proprietors, the professional men, the burgesses, and even the thrifty artisans,—each and all had, in turn, cause to fear. The fact is, that during the days of the Grande Monarque, and ever afterwards, France had been preparing for this. The occupants of the throne, the Jesuits, the Dukes and Cardinals of Guise, the friars and nuns, the confessors and miracle-mongers, court favourites and impertinent lacqueys, had all their share in the work of preparation. The lower orders were weary, beyond endurance, of a monarchy and a church which oppressed them in every way, disgusted them by pre-eminence in vileness, and conferred no appreciable benefit. When then, in addition to all this, a spurious philosophy, at once infidel and democratic, had prepared the firebrands, it required no great skill to kindle a blaze.—He who would speak for God, and for the permanent good of our race, has a more difficult as well as a more worthy aim. The

orators of revolutionary France may serve to represent a great variety of speakers who have pandered to the evil passions of our nature, and who have appeared to accomplish much, though they did little more than apply a blazing torch to materials already heaped together. Were we disposed to alter the illustration so as to make it applicable to the case of those who endeavour to maintain the right and the true, we should point to those twelve stones with which the dauntless and godly Tishbite formed an altar on Mount Carmel for the Lord God of Israel. Barrels of water were poured on the sacrifice, and on the wood, by the jealous priests of Baal. The operation was repeated a second and a third time, until everything was thoroughly saturated. A trench around the altar was filled with water. Then, when all this had been done, and the honour and claims of Jehovah had to be vindicated, a superhuman power was needed.

This suggests a second preliminary remark. Those who would, by their lips, advance the Redeemer's kingdom in our world, must employ nothing which would be offensive in the sight of God. Without His blessing, all our resources would prove unsuccessful. We must, therefore, use none but those of which He approves, and which He will employ. When Babylon had long sat as a queen among the nations, and had, in the pride of conquest, power, and luxury, manifested her disregard of God and men, the forces of Media and Persia came up against her. Successive monarchs of Babylon had ruled

surrounding and subject nations, as with a rod of iron ; had refused to approach the light of Divine truth which burned on Zion ; and had neglected it when brought to their own capital. Babylon's iniquity was full. Monarch and people had been weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Darius and Cyrus had united their armies to overthrow the power which had so long held the nations in bondage. The besiegers perceived that they were not likely to find a speedy entrance into the city, unless they could divert the river Euphrates from its course. Those lofty and massive walls, the wonder of the world, could not readily be either scaled or broken down. Provisions were plentiful within the walls ; and the gardens thus enclosed, with pasture-lands, promised those supplies for time to come. But the diversion of the mighty river, if effected secretly, might give the invaders all the advantage they desired. The Medo-Persian army had the opportunity of employing whatever implements they possessed. There lay the task before them. If practicable, it must be achieved by their own efforts. If beyond the power of man, it must remain undone.

But when, ages before, an army of fugitives stood on the western shore of the Red Sea, trembling as they beheld in its waters an insuperable obstacle to progress, while the warriors of Egypt, led on by their infuriated monarch, were rapidly approaching, bent on the utter destruction of the fugitives, the question was a somewhat different one. Every individual in the hosts of the pursued and the pursuers

knew well that no human power could divert or divide those mighty waters. Certainly, none but the almighty Creator could provide for the Israelites a way of escape. If it pleased Him to deliver them, they must submit implicitly to His will, and carefully observe His directions. If He should choose to employ any kind of instrumentality, that, and that only, would prove effectual. Hence, although mere reason might have suggested that obedience to so strange a command must prove vain, Moses obeyed when the Lord said, "Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."—When we labour to divert the desires and actions of men from their natural selfishness, and worldliness, and sinfulness, we aim at an alteration quite beyond the limits of human power. None but God can effect this. If, therefore, He has appointed the use of any instrumentality, that, and that only, must be employed. Other implements, which are, perhaps, effective in doing evil, would be in our hands, and about our work, the occasion of disappointment and defeat.

1. *Truth is an element of power.*—We cannot deny that error has long triumphed in the world, and that it still fearfully prevails. There was falsehood in the temptation presented to our first parents, when as yet they were innocent and happy. That deceit was successful. From that date error has maintained its hurtful sway among the sons of men. In lands widely separated, and holding no intercourse with



each other, error is enthroned. Everywhere men appear to find delight in the bewitching tones of the sorceress. To listen to her, multitudes rush with eager haste, whilst the Divine instructress repairs in vain to the places of concourse. The gate of the city, and the market-place, are comparatively deserted when truth there commends her merchandise; while both are crowded when error, with flattering words, boasts of her worthless wares. This state of affairs would seem to indicate that error prevails over truth. That such is not really the case, will appear from such considerations as the following:—

*Error never prevails in its own name.* In order to succeed, it must adopt the garb of truth. Certainly, there are times when a flimsy disguise is enough. When the inclinations of men are strongly enlisted in favour of the candidate for their confidence, they will not very closely scrutinize his claims. Thus Ahab believed the false prophets who encouraged him to go up against Ramoth-Gilead; and Zedekiah gave heed to those who declared that he might disobey the great God, and yet avoid the threatened punishment. In our days many of the Hindoos believed their designing leaders, when these affirmed that the English were about to make them all Christians against their will; and some in the west and south of Ireland, before they had worn out the garments provided for them in their extremity by English Protestants, believed the impudent prelate who affirmed that the Saxon heretics of Britain never conferred a benefit on Ireland. But, though often

exceedingly prejudiced, and credulous of what suits its own views, the human soul asks for truth. It turns toward that which seems to be true. It refuses to accept error as such, and at once averts its gaze. Once I planted climbing convolvulus in my diminutive garden. I expected that in summer it would furnish a leafy screen. In the good old days a field had adjoined my plot. But the field had been divided, and the nearest part formed into gardens. At length, a number of cottages arose there, and most unceremoniously turned their backs on me and mine. Henceforth I could not prune my currant-bushes, or watch the growth of early lettuce, without being overlooked by my new neighbours; and children are children. Convolvulus, entwined in the iron palisades, would afford some protection. Thus far I succeeded. But the flowers bloomed for the almost exclusive benefit of my friends on the opposite side of the boundary. That was the best aspect which the plants could command, and they took the advantage, regardless of my feelings, and of the fact that I had planted them every one, and furnished them with the means of climbing until they could reach the iron rods. To me they were almost as plants without flowers. If I ascended a step-ladder, and looked over the fence, I could discern that I should have some beautiful flowers if I lived on the other side. Now, was I not the proprietor of these flowers? Did I not procure the roots from a kind friend? Did I not plant and train them? Did I not thus lead them upward to light and air? Yet no

sooner had they surmounted the low brick wall, than they turned away from me to gain as much as possible of sunshine. The law of their nature triumphed over my proprietorship. They demanded light.—The soul of man asks for truth. When error appears as such, no tyrant, not even a dominant passion or appetite, can compel the soul to embrace it. When our inclinations are strongly committed, a very slight disguise will serve ; but there must be such disguise as makes the error appear to us like truth.

Again : *The success achieved by error is frequently the result of some portion of truth which has been retained.* The covering of gold which overspreads the base metal, may give currency to the counterfeit sovereign, although the amount of gold is so exceedingly small as to impart very little value to the imposition. Those who advocate, as the best form of government, either an absolute monarchy or an unmitigated democracy, may gain the ears of some by stating what is undeniably true of the evils connected with that extreme which is opposite to their own, and then assuming that what is admitted favours the views they seek to maintain. Dr. Trench shows that those huge systems of error which appear in prominent antagonism to Christianity owe much of their power to the portion of truth which they hold. “Thus, the Mohammedan is strong in that he asserts God to be distinct from the creature, so that He may not without blasphemy be confused with it,—a jealous God, who will not give His glory to another. In the might of this faith, armed with the conviction that

God had raised him up to assert this truth in the face of all who were forgetting it, he overran and conquered half a world. Neither are the Indian religions without their elements of an obscured truth; and in this, mainly, that they declare it to be most worthy of God to reveal Himself as man,—that this is the only true revelation of Him,—that an incarnation is the fittest outcoming of the glory of God. And that other later birth of Hindooism, if later indeed it be, that other vast system of further Asia, which we are continually perplexed whether to call it a pantheism, or a gigantic atheism,—that which in the end loses everything in God, and makes absorption in Him the ultimate end of being,—that, too, begins with fairer promises. For it starts with that which is so deeply true, that in God we live, and move, and have our being; that, as man came from God, so he must return to God; that there is but one Spirit which moves through all things.”—In numberless instances, not only the name of truth, but a portion of the truth itself, must be employed, in order that error may gain ascendancy over the human mind.

We must also bear in mind, that *in every system wherein error exists, there is proportionate weakness.* The unworthy material must be removed from the foundation of the building, or the superstructure will be overthrown. The fault may remain awhile undiscovered, but it cannot be hidden for ever. Though the builders may have congratulated themselves on advantage gained, the hour is at hand when their folly will result in their shame and loss.

—The religious systems of heathenism cannot bear up as science advances. They are all marked as doomed. On the other hand, the religion of the Bible has now a firmer hold than ever on the intellect and affections of our race. The Pentateuch had been revered for ages when heathen Rome began to form its mythology; and it has been revered for ages since the last vestiges of that mythology were banished from Europe. Ever and anon there has been a shout raised by its adversaries, that the fatal flaw was at length discovered; but the shout soon died away, and the sacred books remained. The completed Bible has been studied by its admirers, and rudely scrutinized by its foes, during eighteen centuries. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." It will ever live and triumph, because it is unmingled truth.

Let us never, in consequence of the short-lived appearance of triumph on the part of error, lose our confidence in truth. Let us never, for a moment, yield to the temptation to employ duplicity. Our wisdom is to say, as the apostle did of old, "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

2. *The Gospel is an element of power.*—Weapons, or implements, may be without any flaw, and may be well adapted for some purposes, yet altogether inadequate to those which we happen to have in hand. Yonder are lofty and massive walls which have long

been deemed impregnable. We desire to break down those fortifications. Well, here is a sword. Examine it carefully. There is no flaw to be found. Will it answer our purpose? Most certainly, not. It may be of use in the hand of some gallant colonel, leading on his regiment in daring charge; but it will not break down those fabrics. Yonder is a widespread but utterly uncultivated estate. Here is a diminutive spade, by means of which a lady has sometimes removed a bulb from the earth after its flowering, or planted some tender slips which she deemed worthy of her special care. Will this implement serve to reclaim those thousand acres of moorland and furze-bushes? Certainly, not. Yonder, amid ancient forests, are great numbers of wild beasts. The lion, tiger, and hyena, with others, find shelter there. How can they be restrained from predatory incursions on the adjacent folds, and tamed into subjection to human authority? Will the lute, which sounds so sweetly to those loiterers as they recline on the banks of that lake, serve the purpose? Certainly, not.—In like manner, those who are engaged in promoting the real welfare of our race must feel that they need an instrument of no ordinary power. A toy may be without a blemish, yet will not accomplish the task they contemplate. It is not all truth that will prove sufficient, but only Gospel truth. Robert Owen tried what man could do to evoke a new moral world, and failed. The attempt excluded God entirely, and most miserably disappointed its vain contriver. The world

is not to be made new by being marked out in parallelograms. The schoolmaster will not tame the Arabs of modern civilization by reading, writing, and arithmetic, let him employ his voice ever so skilfully. The ramparts of heathen vileness have not been overthrown, and never will be overthrown, by spades, and ploughs, and harrows, or any implements employed by Secularist adventurers. The truth as it is in Jesus is the only instrument equal to this mighty task, the renewal of a world. St. Paul teaches us where we must look for success, as he accounts for his own: "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

3. *Knowledge of Divine things is an element of power.*  
—Some years ago the wife of a Shropshire farmer accidentally received an injury in her shoulder. Had some neighbour been able to state to her the nature and extent of the injury, and to recommend a competent surgeon, the mischief might have been remedied in a few weeks. As it happened, those around her were incapable of giving the required counsel. As the opinions expressed were conflicting, the natural disinclination to seek for help which must be expensive, and would involve long journeys and much trouble, was allowed to prevail. Years afterwards the sufferer was a cripple beyond all

human help.—In the affairs of the soul, those are likely to do most good who have the fullest and clearest knowledge of Divine things. Christians who would be useful to those around them must be well acquainted with the evils of the human heart, and with the remedy which has been provided in the Gospel of Christ. They must be able to speak with certainty concerning the leprosy of the soul, and concerning the Good Physician, who is both able and willing to heal the sin-stricken who draw near to Him. They must neither attempt to heal the wound slightly; nor, on the other hand, must they leave the sufferer in despair. Knowledge of Divine things can only be obtained by diligence and prayer.

4. *Earnestness is an element of power.*—True earnestness, when expressed, is contagious. From various causes, the influence may be resisted, yet it will still be felt powerful. When sincere though mistaken zeal for the ancient gods and time-honoured worship of Rome caused heathen priests to seek the extermination of the Christians, emperors and mobs were alike infected. When Peter the Hermit summoned all who professed the Christian faith to unite in a crusade for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidel, his enthusiasm spread throughout Europe, filling royal palaces, baronial castles, houses of burgesses, and huts of serfs. That the Cross might triumph,—that pilgrims might be enabled to visit the shrines of Palestine without paying tribute to the Sultan, and without fear of Saracen marauders,—appeared for the time an object of



paramount interest. The strong conviction and indomitable perseverance of Columbus at length so far gained on the attention and confidence of Spanish grandees and the Spanish Court, that he was furnished with the means of prosecuting his maritime discovery ; and the same vigour of purpose triumphed over the fears, irresolution, and insubordination of his companions in the perilous yet glorious adventure. In our own days many quiet sort of people have resolved, on the eve of a general election, that they would not allow themselves to become excited. They would use their franchise conscientiously and calmly, and then leave events to take their course. They really did not feel sure that either the welfare of the commonwealth or their own personal advantage depended very largely on the result. Liberals profess to be conservative of all good things, and the Conservatives declare their willingness to be liberal in promoting beneficial changes ; and the leaders of both sides are not without the self-love that appertains to human nature, and they have, moreover, either sons or nephews to provide for. Each candidate may charitably be regarded as a worthy man. So our voter purposes to do his duty at the polling-booth, and then return, quickly and quietly, to mind his shop. But, when the committee-rooms have been fairly opened, and the contest begins, and the excitement becomes general, and nearly every tongue within the limits of the borough is engaged, on one side or the other, as though its owner had received a liberal retainer, our peaceful friend can scarcely

attend to his ordinary duties in a philosophic spirit. —It has been already admitted, that those who are engaged in calling their fellows from the broad way of sin to the narrow road, from worldliness to God, have special difficulties to contend with. Yet, even here, true earnestness will be felt. Luther's voice, calling men from the superstitious and false peace in which they had long been entrenched; Wesley, arousing those who, with the Bible in their churches, had been living in practical heathenism; Dr. Coke, teaching the professed disciples of the Saviour that they were bound by the most sacred obligations to regard the injunction, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;"—may serve to represent thousands of the Lord's faithful servants who have found that their gracious Master deigned to make the zeal He had kindled in their breasts the means of lighting up similar emotion in those around them.

5. *Simplicity of purpose is an element of power.*—A barrister, when pleading on behalf of a prisoner, is supposed to have, for the time, one end in view,—the employment of all fair means to secure his client's acquittal. Knowing that the unfavourable evidence will be fully stated by the counsel for the prosecution, he is relieved from the responsibility of presenting a full view of the case. He is regarded by the jury as speaking from the bar, not the bench. He is an advocate, not a judge. He must apply his utmost skill, and patience, and tact, in setting forth whatever is favourable to the prisoner. He is not

likely to succeed in a difficult case, if his attention be divided. He may, perhaps, not wish to offend the nobleman whose game-keepers the prisoner is accused of grievously wounding, and who, having already declared himself satisfied of the prisoner's guilt, is present in court to witness his conviction. The barrister may wish to impress some who are present with a display of his great learning, luxuriant imagination, classical elegance of style, and poetical taste. He may allow his attention to be divided, because he has a brief connected with a case speedily coming on at *Nisi Prius*, which will be tenfold more remunerative to him than the defence of the poor fellow now at the bar. The barrister may be engaged in writing a note to an old chum whom he sees in court, and with whom he hopes to have some splendid shooting when these wearisome Summer Assizes are over, or to a fair lady whom he hopes to meet at Cheltenham during the winter. In any such case, though the counsel for the defence really believes his client to be innocent of the charge laid to him, that unfortunate man is likely to be convicted, unless the judge be more careful than the advocate.—So, when we speak to the perishing around us concerning the things pertaining to salvation, any undue regard to self, or family, or sect, or taste, or ease, or anything else, may enfeeble our voice. If we are to be mighty, we must have one aim.

6. *Perspicuity of style is an element of power.*—The psalmist declares, “The entrance of Thy words giveth light.” Those who are endeavouring to

rescue their fellows from the power of darkness, set before themselves this achievement,—to secure the entrance of the Divine words. Our hope of success depends on the manifestation of the truth. Then, whether in the pulpit, the family, or the school, we must endeavour to employ those words which will most effectually secure the entrance of Divine instruction. We must leave certain diplomatists, who have parted with their consciences, to boast that language is an invention designed to conceal our meaning. We must leave to the vain and worldly-minded the use of words supposed to be fine, and likely to impress the ignorant with the vastness of our acquirements. We wish to lead these souls to the Saviour. Then let us speak to them in the manner best calculated to answer that purpose. We wish not to be admired, but understood; for we have a weighty message to convey. A heathen poet could deride what he terms “sesquipedalian” words. He did so, as a matter of taste. Let us avoid them, as a matter of conscience, when they would enfeeble the statement of truth. Perspicuity is power. The narrative of Joseph’s sorrows and exaltation arrested our attention before ever we delighted in fine writing; and, if we be spared so long, will appear a model of composition when all love of fine writing has forsaken us. The addresses uttered by the incarnate Son of God have for centuries been the chosen literature of infants and of sages, and will be so when millennial glory breaks upon our world. The “Pilgrim’s Progress” has been read by millions,

and will be read as long as there are travellers on the way to the celestial city. The name and writings of John Wesley will never be forgotten. He said : " I design plain truth for plain people. I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in common life ; those modes of speaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which to common people are an unknown tongue. Yet, I am not assured that I do not slide into them sometimes unawares : it is so extremely natural to imagine, that a word which is familiar to ourselves is so to all the world." Those who would do good must labour to speak so as to be understood.

7. *Love is an element of power.*—When, after some years of patient toil and very limited success, the Wesleyan Missionaries in the Friendly Islands were favoured to witness a marvellous and gracious change, by which in a short period Christianity was established throughout that interesting population, the account given of the transformation by the converted natives was, " The Love has come ! " As the holy fire spread from heart to heart, and from village to village, and from island to island ; as the king and queen, the chieftains and people, bowed before the Lord Jehovah in prayer for mercy, or rose to shout His praises in triumphant songs ; they said one to another, " The Love has come ! " Those who work for God ever feel their need of the same animating flame. That, and that only, can keep us in activity amid discouragement, and ingratitude, and

defection. It may be pleasant to assist in reaping the ripened harvest, and bringing it home amid acclamation. But there is work to be done besides that of reaping. During unpropitious seasons, and in unfavourable circumstances, it is a weary task to break the hard clod and cast in the seed. We need to have strong affection for the Master we serve, and for those on whose behalf we toil. Love, and that only, will impart the gentleness which is essential to success. The Geneva watch may appear very stupid in the hands of an English maker; but no rough usage will repair any injuries it may have received. To throw the watch down on the bench might prove a sort of relief to the puzzled man who has been for an hour endeavouring to put it right, but the chronometer would not be improved. A tender plant may test the patience of a skilful gardener; yet rough handling will not overcome its perverseness. Human nature, when out of order, makes large demand on patience, as well as on skill. Nothing but love in the heart of the operator will supply the requisite gentleness. Besides, love gives a direct power over those we seek to benefit. A chieftain in olden time said, that he never despaired of reducing any fortress if he could once succeed in driving a mule laden with gold in at the gate. Perhaps we need not despair of any persons, if we can really secure the conviction within their minds that we love them. However the flag of rebellion against the great King may wave proudly over the strong keep, and however insultingly the guards on the walls may

reply to our summons, we have a friend within. "If there were more like you, Ma'am," said a notorious convict to Mrs. Fry, "there would be fewer like me."

8. *Perseverance is an element of power.*—To some of us perseverance is not very easy, even when we are encouraged by signs of progress. The task assigned to us may resemble that of the bricklayer, or the labourer, who has to place a few hundred thousand bricks, as his share, in the erection of some large building. In such a task perseverance is required, but progress is seen. Thus, in training a class of Sabbath-school children to read, perseverance is required, but progress is seen. Those who last anniversary had never dealt with words of more than one syllable, can now read an easy narrative; and we have reason to hope that next year they will be able to read almost any chapter in the New Testament. Here, and in similar tasks, perseverance is encouraged by progress. But, when we strive to lead the scholars of our class, or the children of our family, or the members of our congregation, to yield their hearts and lives to the service of the Lord Jesus, it often happens that perseverance on our part is demanded whilst progress cannot be discerned. Yet we must encourage ourselves and each other to persevere. We have looked on as a strong man aimed blow after blow at a huge stone. There has been no appearance of success. Not a fracture; still less a piece separated from the mass. But one more stroke, and the mass was broken asunder. On that plot of ground shower

after shower has fallen, and at other times the sunshine has rested for hours together; yet the children, who were allowed to place seeds therein more than a week ago, cannot discern one green speck. Wait another day, of alternate sunshine and shower, and the youthful expectants shall count a score. Yonder have been men for many weeks boring through the rock in search of water, yet unsuccessfully. As they retire again at even-tide from their arduous employment, there is not a drop of water, and no indication of the kind. But before noon of next day a gushing spring will throw up abundance through the aperture those sons of toil have made. In these, and in many other cases, men who are engaged in the ordinary employments of life are required to persevere without the appearance of progress.—So it often happens to those who labour for Christ, and the salvation of souls whom He has redeemed. These must persevere, whether they are encouraged by the appearance of success or not. We know not what is going on within the mind of that audacious lad, or that wicked man; nor how soon the stony heart may be broken by the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit, accompanying the truth. We must speak to each again concerning the value of the soul, and the wonders of a Saviour's love. We know not how soon that discouraging class in the school, or that unpromising neighbourhood, may become as a very fruitful garden which the Lord has blessed. We must prepare another lesson or sermon, with greater pains and prayerfulness than before. It may be, that from some one for whose



good we have laboured from a sense of duty, rather than from any cheering expectation, blessing shall go forth to others, as streams that make the earth glad. We must continue to strive for their conversion. The records of the church illustrate the happy results of perseverance. Again and again have individuals been saved, and neighbourhoods blessed, when the people of God had almost ceased to hope. Not unfrequently have such individuals become distinguished by zeal and usefulness, and such neighbourhoods have become remarkable for the large number of persons there "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Under every form of discouragement, we may still rely on the declarations of holy Scripture: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

## CHAPTER X.

## THE VOICE A WITNESS FOR ITS MAKER.

"The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." (Romans i. 20.)

"If Phidias could so contrive a piece of his own work, (the shield of Pallas,) as in it to preserve the memory of himself, never to be obliterated without the destruction of the work; well may we read the great Artificer of the world in the works of His own hands, and by the existence of anything demonstrate the first Cause of all things."—BISHOP PEARSON.

TOWARD the close of the seventeenth century, the villagers of Campania now and then observed indications of extensive ruins beneath the surface which they cultivated. A generation was allowed, however, to pass away, before any determined effort was made to ascertain what was really concealed there. During that interval, some husbandman who had taken his plough into the old sward, or had been replanting his vines, sometimes traced evidences that former generations had worked at a greater depth than their successors. When the eighteenth century had half passed away, excavations were commenced, which were continued at intervals until a considerable portion of a buried city was exposed to view. Houses and

shops, temples and theatres, the forum, the amphitheatre, the baths, the prison, and other buildings were discovered. Some of the public edifices were found to be very large, and of beautiful style. The walls of the Pantheon are covered with choice fresco paintings, the colours of which still retain all their vividness. Numberless statues, medals, implements of trade, husbandry, and domestic service, with other relics of the past, were recovered. Many of them are in the Royal Museum at Naples, and others in private collections of antiquities spread over Europe. Those who first walked along that re-opened street were not ignorant of the name of the town thus strangely given back to the world, although seventeen centuries had passed since it was buried beneath showers of ashes which fell during an eruption of Vesuvius. Pompeii disappeared from the world before Papal Rome enthroned herself,—before Mahommed overran the eastern portion of the empire,—and before Constantine had adopted the Cross as a symbol of his faith. Yet there had been preserved some remembrance of Pompeii, and her sister city, Herculaneum. Suppose, however, that the letter of Pliny the younger had been lost during the dark ages; that every other memorial of the eruption A.D. 79 had passed away as completely as the records of prior eruptions; and that no whisper concerning either of the ill-fated towns had come down from remote antiquity. What, in that case, would have been the convictions of those who at length explored the villa of Diomedes, entered through the city-gate, walked along the street, and

surveyed the house of Sallust, the temples of Jupiter, Venus, and Hercules, the immense halls for the administration of justice, and other objects of interest now exposed to view? Would not the spectator have concluded, at once, that what he looked upon was the work of men? There might be much that he could not explain; yet he would feel satisfied that here were the results of human skill and effort. He would feel absolutely certain that human beings had once lived and toiled there; and he would also know something of the nature and degree of their civilization. All this, though he could not know, unless he found some memorial amid the ruins, that Diomedes and Sallust were the names of proprietors; that Jupiter and Hercules were worshipped in the temples; or that Pliny the elder perished on the occasion. Very likely, he would be perplexed by some of the objects he saw, and would feel the need of written and explicit records to sanction his conclusions, and furnish a clue to escape from various difficulties. When at length the letter of Pliny the younger was placed in his hands, with other historical documents, he would be thankful for the additional light thus gained, and would discern at once how the excavated city and the written records explained and authenticated each other. But, before these writings were placed in his hands, the intelligent explorer would feel assured of his ground, as far as he had already gone. He would only smile if it were suggested that an explorer might expect to find a ruined city, as well as anything else, beneath the

Campanian vineyards and cornfields; and that to suppose a builder for the villas and temples, and a sculptor for the statuary, was altogether needless and preposterous. Any reasonable man, placed amid the revealed treasures of Pompeii, would, although entirely ignorant of all that history declares concerning them, affirm unhesitatingly, "Human hands formed these things."

In like manner the universe bears witness of its Maker. As we contemplate its wonders, we are led to say, "A Being of infinite power and wisdom has formed these things." We do not affirm that the existence of God is an innate idea of the human soul. We do not affirm that the proposition, "There is a God," is self-evident to all who understand the terms employed. But we do hold that the works of God furnish abundant evidence of His existence, and some indications of His character. This has commanded the general assent of mankind. There are myriads of persons in Christendom who would be more at ease if they could get rid of the conviction that a Supreme Ruler exists; and yet how few succeed in so completely outraging their own minds! There are millions in Heathendom who have been degraded to the lowest by superstition and wickedness; yet how rarely has the notion of a God been entirely obliterated! Those letters must be engraven in rock, which, in a thousand places, have been exposed to the fierce and incessant action of turbulent waves, yet have, during the course of ages, been seldom or never erased. We admit that there is mystery, solemn and inscrutable,

concerning the existence of the First Cause. To the question, How came He to be ? we can only reverently reply, that it is the very perfection of His nature to enjoy underived existence. There is mystery here. But, having devoutly bowed before Him who dwelleth in light which none can approach, we perceive the universe to be full of harmony. Refusing to bow there, and proudly selecting some other position, or weakly allowing ourselves to be led hither and thither by the cunning craft of ungodly men, we find the universe a scene of unlimited confusion. All is contradiction and disorder. I trace a line of dependent beings until I can follow the series no farther, even in imagination ; and then I leave off dissatisfied. I begin elsewhere, and get at similar results. I explore ten thousand paths, and find that each leads me to a labyrinth. Did I persevere, I should, like some of the sophists, be driven to doubt everything. Standing beside the throne of God, I see all is beauty, and harmony, and joy. That throne is surrounded with light which I cannot fully gaze on ; but the brilliancy, which baffles my investigation of itself, makes all creation distinct to me. Before that throne, then, I will bow. From thence will I gaze upon the wide creation. The one mystery I will reverently accept, since it solves a myriad problems otherwise inexplicable. This is the judgment of the human mind, except when warped by the love of sin, or debased by ages of superstition. This is the judgment which has scarcely ever been completely silenced, even by passion and debasement.

Geology, like sister sciences of earlier date, is taking her place as a handmaid of Christianity. The vain attempt to place science in opposition to Revelation was repeated when geology was in its infancy. Since it has acquired some settled data, it has paid its tribute to the religion of the Bible, while giving to the devout mind enlarged views concerning Him who ruleth over all, and who is God from everlasting to everlasting. Geology is now daily opening treasure-chambers, the very existence of which was unsuspected by our fathers. The student of holy Scripture says to the explorer of these strata, "If I read my Bible aright, you will probably find traces of man's existence among the superficial deposits, but not among those old systems you tell me of. From the former I anticipate confirmation and illustration of what God has revealed to His creature, man; from the latter, only evidences of the power and wisdom of the Eternal Cause." Let us suppose that in the Silurian system, or elsewhere, among formations which are regarded as ancient, evidences of human existence had been found, distinct and complete as those dug from the soil where Neapolitan peasants had for sixteen centuries laboured and died without any suspicion of what lay beneath, how would the sceptics of our days have treated these evidences that man existed myriads of ages before the period assigned in holy writ? Would they allow the believer in Revelation to take refuge in sophisms, such as are propounded by the infidels of all ages? One Pompeii in the Silurian system would

be regarded as conclusive that man was coeval with the creatures that surrounded his surviving works. Thousands of chambers, rich in geological wealth, remain unexplored. No Christian's hand arranged their contents; none can tamper with the evidence, for or against his religion, which they will produce. Yet we fear not the result. True science has been, and ever will be, the handmaid of Revelation; because the God who made the world we explore also made the Book we revere. In fact, the learned infidel can find almost anything but what he desires. Of late years the secrets of by-gone ages have been discovered to a marvellous extent. The stony records of Babylon and Persia have been deciphered by means of the tri-lingual inscriptions, as those of Egypt were by means of the Rosetta Stone. The mighty dead, of almost every age and land, are ready to respond to our inquiries. These are witnesses neither to be bribed nor cajoled. They are ready to speak. They do speak. But they will say nothing that infidelity loves to hear. We are well assured, however, that could the opponents of Scripture produce from those chambers any evidences of human design, they would triumphantly appeal to them. They would unhesitatingly affirm that such marks prove the existence of a designer, of corresponding power.

We are quite ready to admit that creation does not furnish all the instruction we need. The testimony thus given for the Creator is far from complete; and it admits, also, of additional authentication.



We are grateful for the confirmation afforded to nature's testimony by direct revelation, made through the agency of men who were empowered to work miracles, to foretell distant events, to speak with a wisdom and purity affording internal evidence of the truthfulness of their message, and in other ways to show plainly that they were the expounders of the Divine mind and will. We are grateful, also, that these teachers, so commissioned from heaven, do more than merely sanction those lessons which may be proved from the external world. Nature speaks of God, but discloses not all that we wish to know concerning Him who made us, and on whom we depend. We gather, from the vastness of His works, that the power of God must be unlimited ; from the harmony of His works, that His wisdom must be unlimited ; from the sustentation of His works, that the presence of God is unlimited. But we are unable to decide, with any degree of certainty, with what views He regards our own race. An observer may fix his attention on what is pleasing in our condition, until he is ready to believe that he can hear in nature the declaration, "God is love." Another observer is compelled to bend his mind chiefly to the contemplation of what is distressing in our lot, until he is sure that "the whole creation groaneth," and is ready to think that nature speaks of her Creator as a Being of awful wrath. Hence "the world by wisdom knew not God." The wisest of men have felt themselves in an obscurity which they could not penetrate. Enigmas were continually presented,

which they could not solve, but which were of sufficiently awful interest to agitate and distress their inmost souls. The painful mysteries of earth led heathen poets to fable concerning war among the gods, or a throne in hell equal to that in heaven ; or in other ways to attempt a solution of what still remained inexplicable. Now, we are thankful that the Gospel furnishes the clue by which even an infant's mind may be rescued from these labyrinths. Yet would we not undervalue the testimony which nature bears for her Maker. That testimony is to be found everywhere. Every creature that God has made furnishes some evidence of His existence, unity, and majesty. Throughout this vast temple there is no cloister, however diminutive and retired, in which there is not heard the voice of ministering priest pronouncing the sacred Name. To learn all concerning the Supreme, we must pass into the holiest of all ; but in the outer courts there are witnesses to tell of His power and wisdom. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." We linger for a few moments in one of those innumerable cloisters, and listen to the testimony there borne.

1. *Mark the adaptation of the instrument for the desired end.*—Is there evidence of design in the raised printing provided for the blind ? Thousands have been taught to read in this manner. Thousands now find instruction and pleasure, while with their fingers spelling out the books which have been prepared for

their special benefit; and we have reason to hope that many, reading the Book of God, have been made wise unto salvation. But what we ask is, Are there not marks of design in such a book? Do not these evidences of kindly purpose irresistibly carry us back to some individual, or individuals, who made this peculiar kind of book? To say that paper must assume some shape, and this shape being of service to the blind was preserved, is felt to be no sufficient reply to the question, How came this book, printed in raised letters, to exist? Of course, somebody made it, and somebody possessed intelligence to adapt the book to the case of the blind.—Let us now repair to some large market-place during the ordinary transaction of business. Here are several hundreds of persons gathered together. In the course of a few hours, thousands of inquiries must be made and answered, or the affairs of the day will be neglected. Suppose the power of speech taken away: how is the business to be accomplished? The embarrassment of that one day would be felt at all times, and in all places. If by some extraordinary intervention the race had been raised to a state corresponding to our present European civilization, must it not necessarily degenerate into barbarism? In such circumstances the brain-power of Homer, Socrates, Aristotle, and Archimedes,—of Milton, Locke, Newton, and Stephenson,—would never have been developed. If our race is to flourish, there must be a ready communication of ideas among us. Is the gift of speech no evidence of an intelligent Creator?

2. *Observe the countless number of ideas which may be conveyed by this one instrument.*—Let us suppose a number of South-Sea Islanders gathered around the crew of an English ship which has recently arrived in their bay. The natives have had a little intercourse with white men, yet not enough to make them familiar with articles of European manufacture. The object which just now attracts their attention is a musical box, placed before them as an object of barter. They look upon it with wonder. Tune after tune is played. These are, of course, entirely unlike anything which the islanders have been accustomed to hear. They are, however, pleased with the music, though it seems somewhat feeble and dull. To allay any superstitious fears, which might cause the affair to be regarded as an undesirable acquisition, the mechanism is partially explained to them, though without any reference to the maker. Soon afterwards the bartering is at an end, and the ship sails away. The question is asked by some native child, how the box came to be? Would not the reply be, that somebody made it? Though the natives know not the maker, and never heard his name, they would feel quite sure that there had been a maker. The power of producing half a dozen tunes, or half a score, proves that a designer, though unseen and unknown, has here employed his skill.—What shall we say concerning that marvellous instrument which has been committed to our care? The barbarian islanders would be in danger of becoming tired of their purchase. When the limited variety of tunes had been played a thousand times,

the listeners would wish for new ones, but wish in vain. The human tongue has far more extensive powers. The ploughmen who now cultivate our fields have more numerous and enlarged ideas than those possessed by our brave but rude ancestors who, nearly two thousand years ago, fiercely disputed the landing of Cæsar and his Roman legions. Hence their vocabulary is not only different, but more extensive. Yet the tongue can utter each sound. An eloquent speaker, addressing an educated audience, employs far more variety of terms than the husbandmen of Devonshire or of Lincolnshire; and his tongue refuses not to utter any one of them. Our dictionaries provide us with thousands of words not employed, on ordinary occasions, by any judicious speaker; but if, by any chance, one of these should be required by the subject under investigation, or if any youthful orator deems that these lengthy and high-sounding words may serve to conceal a scarcity of thought, the tongue will not refuse to pronounce the ponderous syllables. Again: We, the men of the nineteenth century, have not exhausted the stores of knowledge. Ideas we have never conceived, and never shall conceive in this world, will have to be expressed in human language. Orators of succeeding ages will employ a more copious diction. Multiplied thoughts will demand multiplied words. The tongue will pronounce all that are necessary. The requirements made are fully met by this choice instrument. Can the musical box, with its few tunes, bear witness for its maker, though unseen, absent, and unknown; and shall

the tongue, with its unlimited capabilities of speech, be regarded as presenting no evidence on behalf of *its* Maker?

3. *Consider the precision with which our ideas may be expressed.*—When Cortez landed in South America, the Mexican scouts informed their master, Montezuma, of the peril which threatened their kingdom, by delineating as accurately as they could the appearance of the invaders, their ships, and weapons, and horses. If this specimen of picture-writing had been preserved to our days, we should be compelled to acknowledge that, though rude, it bore evident marks of design. Yet the message thus conveyed by the alarmed Aztecs would fail to give any precise estimate of the Spanish expedition. If, like the Mexicans, we had never seen a musket or a horse, we should not have comprehended the state of affairs after scrutinizing the picture-writing. That our race may be prosperous, there must be, in our intercourse with each other, far greater precision. In numberless instances it is of importance that minute distinctions, and the finer shades of meaning, should be expressed. At times we want to express all that lies between the two extremes of wilful falsehood and unavoidable mistake; between wisdom and craft; between judicious indulgence and ruinous fondness; between holiness and sanctimoniousness; between self-love and selfishness; and a thousand other matters which are in danger of being confounded. We need, in the market, and family, and street, and sanctuary, a precision far beyond any

picture-writing.—Now, we are ready to admit that the tongue is often employed most unskilfully. Blunders are constantly made. Yet the instrument is capable of expressing any distinction which really exists. Care and discipline may be needed, but the mind has been provided with an instrument which is capable of meeting every requirement which can be reasonably made. Shall we say of the rude hieroglyphics of the Aztecs that they must have been traced by the hand of an intelligent designer, but that the tongue had no Maker ?

4. *The facility with which it is used.*—The violin is intended to produce sounds which shall impart pleasure to those who listen. We admit and admire the skill displayed in its invention, and in its adaptation to the end. We know not how the power of producing like sounds could be brought by human artisans more fully within the reach of their fellows. But it is certainly true that the management of the instrument is so difficult, that many persons could never attain it. Others, who naturally have an ear for music, are prevented, by the constant demands of their business, from gaining proficiency in the use of any musical instrument. He who must labour in the fields, from early morn to dewy eve, will scarcely produce sounds from the violin which will please the fastidious. The violin itself is only at hand occasionally, and can be played only at intervals.—Well is it that the voice can be used with greater facility. When we need the aid of our fellows to deliver us from drowning in the river, or from the murderous

ruffian, or from the perplexities and perils of a path into which we have wandered during the darkness of night, we do not depend on some cumbrous appliances of communication which have been left at home. If we can do nothing more, we can shout. Again: We find that the arduous toils of the blacksmith, the miner, and the excavator, do not prevent their efficiency as talkers; and the sedentary tasks of the tailor, the shoemaker, and the sempstress, do not paralyse their tongues. I may forget my umbrella, lose my handkerchief, and be robbed of my watch; but my tongue is generally ready for use. Such facility in the use of what is so important appears needful to promote the welfare of our race. Can we deem its provision to be the result of mere accident?

5. *The diminutive size of the instrument.*—We trace design in the size of a watch. Our fathers were not satisfied with chronometers in the shape of a huge clock standing on the stairs, or in the hall, with loud and solemn tick calling attention to the flight of time, and with massive hands indicating the march of hours. This was a great improvement on the cumbrous machinery by which the same end had been in older time imperfectly attained. But a portable chronometer was needed. How else could the citizen know how to regulate his business, when distant alike from his well-furnished home and the sight of the public clock? The watch was provided; at first so bulky, that its presence in the fob might be readily discerned. Afterwards the skilful artisan reduced its dimensions. The reason why ingenuity



and eye-sight were taxed to the utmost, to provide a measurer of time in so small a case, is manifest. We not only believe in the existence of watch-makers, but greatly admire their patient skill.—Now, in order that our power of interchanging ideas with our fellows may meet the circumstances in which we are placed, an instrument must be provided whose capabilities shall far exceed those of any chronometer of any size, but whose dimensions must be exceedingly limited. The instrument is to form a very small portion of our complex frame, and must not inconvenience those who have continually to bear it about with them. Such an instrument has been provided for us, and the prescribed limits have not been exceeded. The larynx, notwithstanding its complex machinery and varied operations, does not exceed six inches by two. No one in health desires that his speaking-apparatus should be smaller. A youth who has had an old family watch given to him may, in process of time, be led to think that, though it is of excellent quality, there is too much of it. At first he prizes the watch exceedingly, walks straighter than he has been accustomed to do, and seems to himself to have suddenly entered on manhood. He feels an irrepressible desire to note how the watch which used to be worn in his grandsire's fob marks the flight of time ; and this uneasiness is intensified by the presence of any of his companions. But, in process of time, he becomes dissatisfied because of the vastness of his treasure. He did feel manly, but he now feels grandfatherly. He is ashamed to display

that which he once coveted so ardently, as it seems to indicate that he belongs to a remote age. Though he is youthful and vigorous, he begins to think that its weight is oppressive, and he longs to have the cash needful to exchange it for one of modern make. But the young man is not disturbed by the dimensions of his larynx. The speaking-apparatus is just what it should be. Most persons pass through the world without thinking much about the wonderful instrument with which they have been entrusted. Their words may be numerous, but they seem to flow forth spontaneously. The speaker troubles not to learn about the structure of the throat and the tongue. If he wants to say anything, he says it, and there is an end of the matter. Herein is the perfection of the design; and herein are seen the unlimited wisdom and power of the Designer.

6. *Our ability to convey ideas to persons who are distant.*—Suppose that we are standing near to a large reservoir of water. We do not positively know whether the reservoir is natural or artificial. We think we can discern evidences of human contrivance and workmanship, but are not absolutely certain. Let us, then, lose sight of the question concerning the reservoir itself. We discover, however, that, connected with this reservoir, there is an extensive system of pipes, and cisterns, and taps, by which the inhabitants of the adjacent town are supplied with water at their pleasure. The design of all this is apparent. It has been deemed of importance, that not only should water be found abundantly in the

reservoir, but that it should be conveyed to those dwellings. Such a supply has been made for my dwelling. The water comes at stated times, and is ready for my use. Now, I may know nothing concerning those who laid those pipes, and provided this cistern ; but I am satisfied that there have been contrivers and workers. No sane person could be persuaded that it was a mere accident by which the ten thousand houses of this town were thus supplied. We feel as certain that human skill and effort have been employed, as though we had seen the work in progress.—Now, at another time, whilst sauntering along the edge of a cliff, I see a friend of mine walking on the beach, and wish to apprise him of my presence. Were he near to me, I could touch him ; were he looking in my direction, I could wave my hand, and invite him to ascend and walk with me. But he is at a distance, and gazing on the waves which are gently falling along the shore. I cannot convey thought to the crew of that vessel which is coming round the headland, eight or ten miles distant. But I can, in a moment, inform my friend that I am on the cliff, and in another make him understand what I wish him to do. In other words, the instrument entrusted to me has been so formed that I am unable to disturb a continent, or a nation, with my clamour ; but I am able to accomplish that which is needful. If our voices could not convey ideas beyond the length of our arms, they would still be invaluable, but insufficient. If the human voice were more powerful than that of a cricket, in proportion as a

man is larger than a cricket, any man might become a plague to the entire species. Is there no design in the careful adjustment of power given to the voice?

7. *The capability of regulating the force of sound.*—The machinery by which our cloths are formed can be adapted to the material it has to work upon. But it is hard to extend this power of adaptation beyond certain limits. When the dreadful civil war broke out between the Federal and the Confederate States of America, and cutoff the usual supply of cotton to Europe, a strong desire prevailed throughout Great Britain that our dependence on the Slave-States for cotton should be terminated. But there were great difficulties to be overcome. One of these arose from the nature of the machinery existing in Manchester and elsewhere. More cotton could be grown in India than we could consume. But, not only were the Indian fields very remote, and their produce inferior, but our machinery was unsuitable for the manufacture of such cotton. If any artisan could have devised a plan by which that machinery, without ceasing to be suitable for the best "Sea Islands," should have become equally adapted for inferior sorts from India which were worth the freight, he would have been a benefactor of his race.—Now it is essential that the voice should be able to adapt itself to circumstances. It is desirable, for instance, that the Prime Minister of England should be able to make himself heard by the House of Commons, or by his constituents, even when they do not choose to be very attentive; and also that he should be able to address, in words of suitable

gentleness, a widowed Queen. Preachers of the Gospel address large crowds in all sorts of places, and must also speak to sufferers, who, by reason of feebleness and pain, tremble at the slightest noise. The captain of a ship must make himself heard by the man at the wheel, and the sailors on the foretop, when the wind is howling fiercely ; and, on another occasion, he speaks in accents of tenderness to his wife and babes in the quiet home from which he has been absent so long. The voice can do all this, and so bears testimony to a gracious Designer.

8. *The pleasure attendant on friendly converse.*—A number of children are seated around the table in a parlour which you have occasion to enter. They are eagerly and joyously employed. The merry laugh not unfrequently bursts from the happy group ; yet is there an appearance of considerable earnestness. You draw near to the table to see how they are engaged. There are your friend's children, and three or four little ones belonging to some neighbours. They are putting together a large puzzle-map. Your friend says, "I am rather extravagant with those children. But, you see, I want them to love the company of their little friends here, and to be mutually helpful ; so I am always buying them some instructive toy or other." There is a twofold design ; and you see the manner in which it is accomplished. —Our heavenly Father has similar designs concerning us. The entrance of sin into our world has brought much of confusion into this and every department. But His design is evidently, that we should delight

in each other's society, and be mutually helpful. He has, therefore, made speaking and hearing to be pleasant. It is well known that "the Silent System," when rigorously carried out in prison-discipline, has driven the sufferers to the verge of madness. Some among us delight to be alone; but even *they* want some friends to whom they can say, "How sweet is solitude!"

9. *The multiplicity of operations performed.*—In tracing the course of a railway, I find that here and there the iron-line crosses some ancient turnpike on the level. Gates are then employed as a protection. Here is one small portion of ground, which on some occasions has to serve for the passage of ordinary vehicles and travellers, and on other occasions for that of locomotive engines and their attendant trains. Great care must be taken. Gates alternately close the rails and the highway. Somebody planned all this. But if the train, and each carriage or cart, each ox or sheep, each equestrian or pedestrian, each passenger of any sort, turned the gates in the proper direction without any effort, and without so much as knowing what was done, we should admire the marvellous machinery; and the Great Western Company would, doubtless, reward the ingenious inventor.—Now, while we are speaking, we are breathing. Frequently, while words are distinctly pronounced, sounds of exquisite harmony are also produced by the singer. But the marvel to which we specially refer is, that we often swallow food the moment before we have spoken, and the moment

after, yet receive no injury. We are listening to a public speaker. He pauses, takes up a glass, drinks a little water, and proceeds. The man reflected not on the consequences which must result if the valve did not close. Certainly he employed no effort to prevent the water pouring down the wind-pipe. The audience took it for granted that no catastrophe would occur. But infinite skill had been employed, or the man would have been instantly suffocated.

10. *Our inexplicable control over the voice.*—There is much that is surprising in the transmission of messages from this island to the Continent by means of the electric wire. The Sovereign of Britain and the Sovereign of France can place themselves in immediate communication with each other, regardless of the broad expanse of water which separates them.—But, in order that my will may control the organs of speech, a broader gulf than the Straits of Dover must be spanned. I can feebly follow the teachings of those who speak of the Electric Telegraph, and can follow in imagination the course of the transmitted message along the ocean-bed : but who shall teach me concerning the control of matter by mind ? Where is the connexion between my resolving to inquire the time of day, and the utterance of the needful words by my tongue ? There is a gulf apparently impassable between matter and mind. Yet it must be crossed, if the machinery so exquisitely formed is to be controlled and directed according to my will. I am thus continually moving an apparatus of marvellous

structure and vast power, by cords which are invisible alike to myself and to others. There must be One Mind which fully comprehends the mystery, and imparts the secret energy.

11. *The provision for self-reparation.*—You call on a gentleman who is about to leave this country for a time, to sustain in India, or elsewhere, a position of responsibility and emolument. You are not therefore greatly surprised to observe, as you stand in the entrance-hall, that he is preparing to take with him many of the pleasant and beautiful things to which he and his family have been accustomed. Here are men placing a superb and rich-toned piano in a strong case. You observe with what care the choice instrument is packed. The design of that strong case, and the wrappers, and other means of preservation, is apparent. Yet, when the piano is examined, in Calcutta or elsewhere, the young ladies will most likely assure dear papa that the sound is intolerable, and that they really cannot attempt his favourite piece of music until the instrument has been tuned. The pater-familias knows well that the history of a pianoforte is the record of sundry disasters and expensive repairs.—But the voice of such a man as the late Robert Newton shall for half a century be employed for public benefit, almost every day, at every risk, and in travelling by land and by sea, yet be a noble instrument still.

12. *The adaptation of the voice to the ear.*—Few men would have the effrontery to declare that in course of time a lock and key, similar to Chubb's master-



pieces, shall be formed by chance, the rotation of atoms, the perishing of inferior species, or any such method. The key bears marks of design when separately considered, and so does the lock : but, when their adaptation to each other is taken into account, the evidence is complete. They were both made by someone ; made by the same person, or under his direction ; and made for each other. The key would have been useless without the lock. So the human voice would have proved useless had there been no ear. Undulations might have been made in the air, but with no beneficial result. They would have rebounded from castle-wall and cottage-door ; encountered trees and shrubs, flowers and grasses ; floated along lake, and river, and ocean ; yet without imparting delight or instruction. The adaptation of the voice to the ear forbids any thought concerning accident. Here is a distinct testimony on behalf of the Creator. Here “are clearly seen—His eternal Power and Godhead.”

## CHAPTER XI.

## CONTROL OVER THE TONGUE ATTAINED.

"Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." (Isaiah vi. 6, 7.)

"Who shall set a watch before my mouth, and a seal of wisdom upon my lips, that I fall not suddenly by them, and that my tongue destroy me not?" (The Son of Sirach.)

WHEN this earth was prepared for the residence of the human family, the brute creation was placed in complete subjection to our first parents, who had been made partakers of the intelligence and purity of their gracious Creator. Before the creation of Adam, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him." When, however, man unhappily despised the authority of his Maker, he lost to a great extent his own delegated authority. He refused to bow before the uncreated throne of the infinite

Jehovah, and was therefore cast down from the position of vice-regal dignity in which he had been placed. He acknowledged not the sceptre which is for ever swayed by Him for whom are all things ; and he found that the diminutive sceptre which had been entrusted to him was broken in his grasp. Descended though we are from him who once ruled in Eden as God's vicegerent, we should tremble to meet the lordly lion in the wilds of Africa, or the fierce tiger on the plains of Bengal ; we dare not encounter the shark and the crocodile in their watery domains ; and we prudently avoid the lurking-places of many of the creeping things of the earth, knowing that the wounds they inflict may prove fatal. Yet, by virtue of the redeeming plan, some portion of our original authority has been restored to us. The inferior animals do render us a sort of homage. It is very imperfect, performed unwillingly, and in many cases refused altogether. Actual and deadly hostility frequently takes the place of homage. But the latter is not altogether refused. Among the multifarious denizens of our world, man does not occupy so low a position as that to which he would be entitled by mere bulk and physical energy. The fragment of a sceptre, which he grasps, is not ignored. If rebels against his authority are numerous, and their treason is of the most flagrant character, a few from every species have been induced to pay fealty to the race which was originally constituted supreme on earth. St. James, when writing on the power and unruliness of the human

tongue, declares, "Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind." Indeed, more than two thousand years after Adam's transgression, when Noah and his family had just come forth from the ark, the charter of our supremacy was renewed, though in qualified phrase. Our powers were to be limited, but the same authoritative seal was attached to the charter. The sceptre was less powerful, but the same Supreme Governor placed it in our hand. "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea ; into your hand are they delivered." Perhaps man's dominion over the lower animals can be discerned nowhere more clearly than in the extent to which he can employ the immense strength of such huge creatures as the elephant. When St. James wrote his Epistle, and during the preceding century, emperors and generals had been accustomed to gratify the citizens of imperial Rome by exhibitions in which elephants took a conspicuous part. That such spectacles had been frequently given, would be familiar to the minds both of writer and readers. The rulers of Carthage, during its latest struggles with Rome, and those of India, made large use of these gigantic animals. Elephants, by hundreds, were to be found in their armies ; and, in times of peace, those sagacious animals were taught to employ their vast power in various tasks. A little child, seated on the neck of

an elephant, guides its motions! Occasionally the potentates of antiquity took pleasure in having such animals as the lion and the tiger, the leopard and the wolf, trained to manifest their subjection to their human superior. Here, then, a difficult problem had in part been solved by man, without any special aid sought from on high.—But a more difficult problem remained, of which the solution could never be found by our unassisted wisdom and power. The question is, How can the due control of the human tongue be attained? We learn from the inspired apostle, that, if this task be accomplished, our efforts must have been rendered effectual by Him to whose power nothing is impossible. “Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame.” This difficulty is everywhere manifest. Rulers find it a hard task to confine the speech of their subjects within just limits. Pastors of Christian churches find it one of their most perplexing duties to induce the people among whom they labour not to injure, pain, and offend each other by words which are not expedient. Parents are unable to guide aright the little tongues around them. There is one circumstance which manifests most clearly the unruly disposition of the human tongue: Good people, who really wish to speak aright, who are deemed wise and worthy, who have been long struggling for the mastery, who have made a thousand resolves, and adopted all kinds of prudent suggestions, yet

find it almost impossible to govern aright the one tongue which they must acknowledge as their own, though they have been ashamed of its pranks times without number. A few suggestions may lead the reader to profitable meditation, and to the finding of treasure among his own thoughts. But we must bear in mind, throughout, that the introduction of a Divine element of power is essential to success. "The tongue can no man tame." "With God all things are possible."

1. *The heart must be rectified.*—The affections of the soul regulate human speech and conduct. In the heart we find the source of those streams which flow, for benefit or injury, to those around us. "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." You are seated at table, and raise a glass of water to your lips. The taste is unpleasant, and the water is evidently unfit for use. Instead of incurring risk, you endeavour to ascertain the cause of impurity. You call for a clean glass, and draw a little water from the tap. The taste is as unpleasant as before. You have a new and approved tap attached to the water-pipe, but can discern no favourable change. You have the cistern carefully examined and purified, but there is no material improvement. Though you incline to think that the water is somewhat less

nauseous, it is still very distasteful. The pipes which convey it from the mains in the street to your cistern are removed, and replaced by some of superior kind, yet without any great advantage. The occasion of the mischief must be reached, if real good is to be effected. The mains are taken up in consequence of remonstrances offered by you and many other consumers. It is now concluded that all will be right. The new pipes are of unexceptionable kind. You once more raise the glass to your lips. There is just the old taste. Perhaps it is not quite so bad as before ; but, evidently, the water is unfit for use. More must be done, if the evil is really to be removed. The workmen employed have now arrived at the vast reservoir at some distance from the city. This is emptied, purified, and repaired. All is in order again. Raise your glass to your lips, and give to your friends. Any improvement? Very little, if any. There is no thorough change. The water is still both unpleasant and injurious. Where can the occasion of the mischief be found? Climb yon hills ; dig down among those rocks ; explore deeper still ; penetrate yet further. Now you have reached the strata through which the water flows before it is seen by human eye. Probably you conclude that none but the omnipotent Creator can purify the stream. Some additional impurity the water had contracted from the reservoir, pipes, and cisterns ; but here, under these ancient rocks, was the principal and abiding cause of the evil. The remedy must be

applied here, or it will be of little service. Rectify this evil, and all may be well.

So long as the heart is depraved, it will be useless to expect the language to be uniformly and truly good. A bad man may speak aright on some subjects, and under some circumstances ; and there may be still more frequently the appearance of that which is right. But, so long as the fountain remains corrupt, the streams will contain that which is hurtful. Among some classes the evil is much more disguised than among others ; yet it is there. Angry passions, for instance, may be expressed in polite or in vulgar fashion. It is generally supposed, that in the British House of Commons a more respectful and dignified bearing is maintained toward an opponent than in the American Congress. But, if bitterness and malice be cherished and expressed, they are not neutralized by the complimentary terms employed. A man may be wounded to the very soul, though addressed in polite irony, and spoken of as "the gallant colonel," "my learned friend," or "the honourable member." Hatred is not manifested in the drawing-rooms of the West End, or in the mansions in our various counties, as it is in Billingsgate, the Minories, or similar localities in the provinces ; yet is it evil in its results, as well as in its nature. In like manner, falsehood will assume various forms in different circles. There is that which it wears in royal courts ; in the highest walks of diplomacy ; in those assemblies where the titled, the wealthy, the gifted, and the lovely, congregate ;



in the <sup>\*</sup>Exchange, and other resorts of merchants; within the retail shop; in the back-parlour where gossips idle away precious time; and among the haunts of thieves, libertines, and drunkards. But if in any circle the heart is so wicked as to prefer gain to truthfulness, the utterances of the lips will be evil, whatever the tones and pronunciation. Every other form of evil which is cherished within the heart will lead, at times, to corresponding speech. So long as the nature of man remains carnal, there will be manifestations of the indwelling sinfulness. That the streams may be pure and beneficial, the secret spring from whence they flow must be cleansed. Then shall there be within living water springing up into everlasting life, and flowing forth to gladden and bless all around.

2. *Unhesitating submission to the teachings of holy Scripture.*—When we have reason to expect that we shall soon have to act in circumstances at once exciting and perplexing, and know that much will depend on our acting aright, we feel it to be desirable to lay down, if possible, some rules, distinct and wise, by which we may be governed. If, during the period of hurry, we find it needful to reconsider our principles, and are led to take exceptions to them, we may become involved in painful and inextricable confusion. There may be cases in which an earlier arrangement is impossible; and no invariable rule can be laid down. We must then make the best of our position, and endeavour

to be self-possessed, and circumspect, and prompt, so as to blunder as little as possible. But, certainly, we should prefer having fixed and well-grounded principles to guide us in such emergencies.—Now, in reference to our speaking, (as, indeed, in all matters of faith and practice,) our unvarying question is to be, What saith the Lord? “To the law, and to the testimony.” Instead of inquiring, Which course would be most profitable? or, Which would be most pleasing to those whose favour I value? or, Which would suit my natural inclinations? and a host of other queries; we must have it settled in our minds to ask, What would my Divine Master have me to do? If our hearts be fully subjected to this rule, we shall find our perplexities marvellously diminished. Even when called upon to act at once in some matter newly presented to us, we shall seldom be embarrassed. One short, unvarying, oft-repeated, and therefore ready question will assist in solving a thousand difficulties: What does the Book teach concerning this matter? Thus, in acting and talking, we shall be guided aright. Let us keep to the rule, and strive to bring our hearts into subjection thereto: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.”

3. *Be on your guard so as to arrest the first wrong word.*—That which is affirmed in holy Scripture concerning the utterance of angry words may be applied to other forms of unlawful speech: “The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water:

therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with." In our own country we have had numerous instances of the prodigious power of water in motion ; and in some other countries such instances have been yet more numerous and impressive. In some cases the motion has originated in some very small aperture occasioned by neglect, or wilfulness, or malice. While the water was still, the placid element seemed to possess but little power. But when an aperture had been made, motion commenced. It was speedily manifest that water in motion has an energy altogether beyond that of water in a state of rest. Soon a little more earth was removed, and the motion was augmented. Then earth, and sand, and stones, and clay, and every kind of material found in the surrounding barrier, began to yield to the pressure of the stream. Each moment the aperture increased ; and the volume, and velocity, and power of the descending stream were augmented. At length the obstruction entirely gave way ; and the pent-up waters, as a desolating flood, poured with resistless violence on the vale beneath. The district of country near the eastern coast of England, known as the " Bedford Level," has in this way experienced most disastrous changes ; perhaps more than any other part of Great Britain. Its greatest length is about sixty miles, and its greatest breadth about forty ; and it extends into six counties. Henry of Huntingdon, who wrote in the days of the early Plantagenets, describes the country as being " very pleasant and agreeable to the eye, watered by many

rivers which run through, diversified with many large and small lakes, and adorned with many woods and islands." William of Malmesbury, who lived about the same period, described the Lordship of Thorney as abounding in lofty trees, fruitful vines, and productive orchards, and having no waste land in any part. But in the lapse of time, through ignorance, carelessness, and selfishness, the ramparts which had been erected for the protection of this pleasant land against the incursions of the sea and rivers became insufficient. The ocean made sudden and extensive devastation, and various streams gradually encroached upon the soil adjacent. At length, the Lordship of Thorney, containing eighteen thousand acres, was, with the exception of a hillock upon which the abbey had been built, under the water. Other lordships were not much better off. One of our kings is said to have affirmed, that an entire county could be employed in no better manner than to make roads of one half to enable everybody to escape from the other half. Long was the greater part of the district composed of muddy and stagnant waters. The inhabitants of the Fens, and the towns in their neighbourhood, could only have communication by means of boats; and this often with difficulty, in consequence of the sedge and slime with which the ground was covered. In the winter, when there was ice, but not sufficiently hard to sustain persons on its surface, the inhabitants were completely isolated, and frequently in danger of perishing. At intervals, immediately before the wars of the

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Commonwealth, and after the Restoration, great efforts were made to restore the land to its ancient prosperity. In consequence of the efforts and success of Francis, Earl of Bedford, the recovered district was called "The Bedford Level." Since the days of the Earl, the residents have had constant reason to guard against "the letting out of water." In 1862, several scores of farmers were flooded out of their lands. Many fields, which had recently been covered with verdure, were submerged. Many thousands of acres were, for the time, completely lost. The value of the property thus destroyed was enormous, but could scarcely be calculated. The primary occasion of the mischief was supposed to have been, that the tidal waters had gradually undermined the brickwork of an important sluice. When this had been going on for some time, the catastrophe occurred suddenly.—Enough has been said of this particular district, and its history, to fix the attention upon *water in motion* as an illustration of the vast power of unlawful speech. The angry thoughts which may lodge within the breast of an individual may be compared to a bulk of water pressing upon some embankment. There is constant danger of some mischief. We have great reason to employ our utmost effort to have the barrier strengthened, and the pressure diminished. But one improper word will greatly augment the peril. We shall then have water in motion, instead of water at rest. So long as anger, or any other evil, remains pent up within the breast, it is under some sort of control. Reason,

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conscience, interest, self-respect, refinement, and other motives, serve to restrain it. Let there be no disclosure of its presence, and we may hope that it will pass away. But let one word expressive of the pent-up feeling be uttered, and the probability of more mischief has been greatly increased. The aperture has been made; and, unless immediate care be employed, the barriers will give way. What does an infuriated speaker care for considerations which he held, half an hour before, to be sacred? When separating from acquaintances, how often have we had to lament that we uttered the first word which led to so much of anger, or pride, or scandal, or ill-nature, or levity, or some other evil!

4. *Promptitude in the utterance of the right word is desirable.*—We read, “A soft answer turneth away wrath.” “A word spoken in due season, how good is it!” In order, however, that the advantage may be secured, the proper word must be spoken at the proper time. A fire, which might now be extinguished by a bucket-full of water, may in the course of an hour defy the united efforts of half-a-dozen fire-brigades, with all their appliances. The inhabitants of a certain village in Gloucestershire will long remember a dry Saturday followed by a wet Sunday. On the forenoon of that Saturday the hay in the fields was in capital condition. There had been no rain during several days, and the sun had shone gloriously. The farmers and their men were, therefore, exceedingly busy; and many a prudent man had calculated how much could possibly be secured

by making the most of the prolonged twilight of that summer day. But the cry of "Fire!" was heard from the village which was generally so very quiet. Of course, everybody must, as in duty bound, lend a helping hand to extinguish the flames. Scythes, rakes, and forks were hastily cast aside, as it was supposed, for a little time. But, alas! there was to be no more haymaking that day. It was discovered that some buildings at one extremity of the long village were on fire. The steward's child had been amusing another child. During their play, the visiter had ignited a match. By means of this, a little straw was kindled. A rick took fire. Everything was exceedingly dry, and the gentle wind fanned the blaze, and drove it toward the adjacent buildings, which were also speedily burning. By this time a moderate crowd of men, women, and children had assembled, and proceeded to do their utmost to extinguish the flames. If their zeal was not perfectly well directed, they worked with a hearty good-will. Unfortunately, most of the cottages were covered with thatch; and this, under the influence of a hot summer's sun and the wind, was prepared, like tinder, to foster the smallest spark. Notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the villagers, and of those who came to their help, the flames continued to spread hour after hour. One dwelling after another was attacked and destroyed. The fire had commenced at one extremity of the village; and it so happened that the wind blew steadily thence along the street toward the other extremity. It soon became apparent that every man whose house

had not been already turned into a blackened ruin was contending for the safety of his own home. Many dwellings might yet intervene; but, unless the raging element could be subdued, the last dwelling would soon be consumed. That was a terrible afternoon. It will not be placed in the records of our nation side by side with the Great Fire of London, which occurred in the reign of Charles the Second; but in the annals of the Gloucestershire village the tale will long be told from sire to son. That night, with scarcely an exception, the villagers were homeless. The next morning, by a providence doubtless wise, but mysterious, copious rain began to fall, and continued, until much of the hay, which had been ready for leading when the fatal match was ignited, was wasted. Had that rain fallen twenty-four hours sooner, the mischief might have been confined within narrow limits. Doubtless it was better that succour should be denied, though we cannot explain why. But, had any one of the many strong men who toiled so hard during that hot afternoon been present when the diminutive blaze affrighted the children, and had he poured thereupon a single bucket of water, the disaster might have been prevented.—We must endeavour to speak the right word at the right time. The reply made by Nabal to the request of David, when in sore distress, was ungenerous and provoking: “Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master.” We cannot be surprised that David was greatly displeased. He had already acted



as the champion of Israel, and had protected the property and servants of this rich churl. Nabal's conduct could be explained only by some such account as that given of him by his servants: "He is such a son of Belial that a man cannot speak to him." David was, however, unduly excited, and he purposed to avenge himself by destroying the man and all belonging to him. This was mercifully prevented by the wise promptitude of Abigail. Her gentleness turned aside the catastrophe. She thus rescued her household, and preserved David from an act which he must have bitterly lamented to the close of his life. In the success which attended the mediation of Abigail, we have an instance of a soft answer turning away wrath; but we are also reminded how important it is that the healing word should be spoken in season. According to the word of David to this successful suitor, the delay of a few hours would have rendered her scheme fruitless.

5. *The amount of our talking must be restrained within due limits.*—We are taught, "He that hath knowledge spareth his words." "A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." A Being possessed of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness can, as it pleases Him, call into existence an unlimited number of objects, each one of which shall be perfect after its kind. This is not, however, the case with human beings, or with any finite being whatever. If we

would produce in any department that which is excellent, we must employ great care, and not attempt too great speed. It is not enough that our intentions are good. We may wish to excel, and yet, by attempting too much, frustrate our own purposes. A Sheffield cutler may wish to make knives, and razors, and other cutlery, quite equal to those of any other manufacturer. But if he permit the pressure of business and the desire for gain so to influence his mind, that he allows time neither to himself nor his workmen for anything more than the production of the greatest possible quantity of goods, there will be many "wasters." Purchasers will experience mortification through the ill-advised speed of the Sheffield cutler. None of them will knowingly purchase more of his "wasters." Similar results would follow an undue demand for quantity in the cloth-factories of Leeds and Bradford, or the cotton-mills of Manchester and Stockport. So it would be in the Royal dock-yards, arsenals, and garrisons, in the Mint, and every other department of public service. Notwithstanding the glorious flag which might wave there, "wasters" would be turned out. Due care must be taken in the formation of ships, cannon, and coin. Quality must be regarded, as well as quantity; or, though there may be the appearance of much business effected, there will finally be both disgrace and loss. If the manufacturer do not choose to give himself time to examine and test his own workmanship, the worthlessness of some portion will be discovered when the evil cannot be remedied. The ship must encounter

storms, and the artillery be employed in the battle-field ; and that which *ought* to be tested now, *will* be tested ere long.—Thus, in regard to our words, it is not enough that we mean well, or even that our hearts have been renewed. We are really not capable of producing an unlimited quantity of good talk. If the machine is to be kept in perfect order, with all its wheels, levers, pulleys, and springs, so that the results shall be entirely creditable, it must not be always going. We were framed for talking, but also for listening. We were formed for society, and cannot bear to be entirely excluded from our fellows ; but we were also so constituted as to need retirement and solitary meditation. Whilst a hermit, if not of feeble intellect when he first repairs to his desert-cave, is likely to become so speedily ; on the other hand, determined, rapid, ceaseless talkers, equally contravene the laws of nature, and are often guilty of mischievous blunders.

6. *Self-education must be our daily task.*—To play skilfully on the organ, or any other musical instrument, is not natural to any human being. In every case it is an acquirement. Some persons can acquire the power much more readily than others, but even these need instruction and much practice. Those who have stood high above their fellows as masters of music would never have excelled at the organ, if they had not been trained before they arrived at threescore years. Most persons need daily practice for years in order to excel. It is natural for the eagle to soar, and for the lark to pour forth melo-

dious notes, and for the zebra to move swiftly ; but it is not natural for human beings to play well on the instruments which their fellows have formed. We may not be able fully to explain why the untrained fingers will not fall aright on the keys or strings ; but we know well that they do not. There must be earnest and constant effort. No theorizing will do. Reading books on music, listening to lectures on the subject, observing the performances of others, and reasoning on what has been read, heard, or seen, may be all well in due place, but will not serve as a substitute for frequent practice.—In like manner, it is not natural for human beings, in their fallen condition, to talk according to the high standard set up in God's blessed word. Whilst our first parents walked in Paradise, spotless as when they came from the creating hand of God, it was natural to them to speak aright ; as natural as to breathe the balmy air, or gaze on the lovely landscape. Melody pleasing to the King of kings—the music of love, and trustfulness, and hope, and joy—was poured forth from their hearts, and found expression in their words, as naturally as the music of the groves wells up from the throats of the feathered songsters. But, alas ! this is not the case now. It is not natural for human lips to speak aright. When such results take place, it is GRACE prevailing over nature. Such grace must be daily sought, and daily employed. So shall we become expert in detecting any discordant sound which our lips may have uttered. So shall we find increasing pleasure in that music which delights

our Lord. So shall we gain power over the wondrous instrument which has been entrusted to us, and approve ourselves to the all-listening Ear. So shall the bias of our nature be rectified, and all things will become new. So, when admitted to heaven, it will be as natural to us rightly to employ our lips, as it is for the angel Gabriel to fly swiftly at the command of his God.

7. *Divine aid must be constantly obtained.*—Those who were assembled in Jerusalem on that day of Pentecost when the Lord Jesus sent down to His disciples the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, might well marvel to hear the followers of the Crucified speaking of the wonderful works of God in the mother-speech of all present. There were present a few from almost every land whither the Roman eagle had flown. Yet the unlettered Galileans could not only make them understand, by employing that modified Greek which was in part known to many of them, but could awaken their liveliest feelings, and reach the very depths of their souls, by speaking to them in their own tongues. A few weeks earlier, Peter, who seems to have been the principal preacher on the day of Pentecost, could not speak a few words in ordinary conversation without betraying to what province he belonged. He could not have palmed himself off as a Jerusalem Jew, although he had been in the metropolis several times. He could not have personated a villager of Judæa. But when he had received power from on high, and the tongues of fire had rested upon him and his fellows, he could

make all understand his message, from whatsoever country they came. The ambassadors of the Cross were enabled to preach Christ crucified wherever they journeyed. But, for this power, they were continually dependent on the Divine Head of the church. Had this miraculous aid been withdrawn, Peter would have talked once more like a Galilean.—In like manner, Christian people, who have been taught to desire to speak and act aright, are constantly dependent upon the gracious power of God. In some instances the change in the mode of speaking, which has taken place at the period of conversion, has made men marvel. Love to the Saviour has now found expression. Bunyan represents, that one peculiarity which was observed by the men and women of Vanity Fair, in the two strangers who sought to pass through their town, was, that Christian and Faithful spoke another language. If we wish thus to honour our Lord, and show plainly that we are seeking another and a heavenly country, we must daily have help from God. So soon as we neglect to ask this, we shall relapse into our early dialect, and speak as those do who have their portion in Vanity Fair. We have need to pray, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer!” “O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.” “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips.”

8. *We must learn from the failures of the past.*—The

advancement of the human family, regarded as a whole, largely depends on a suitable improvement of the past. The science and civilization of western nations, in this nineteenth century, are chiefly the results of rightly using the successes and the failures of other peoples and other periods. By the art of writing, and more recently by that of printing, each generation has been enabled to avail itself of the experience of preceding ages, and also to leave its augmented stores for the use of successors. Without some such means of gaining by the experience of the past, we could scarcely make advance in anything that is desirable. Tribes not possessing those means have deteriorated, instead of advancing. We must add, that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus is evidently needed to teach nations how to employ their advantages. Greece and Rome, China and India, were not ignorant of writing. Still it is true, in an important sense, that our greatness is founded on a right use of the past.—This is largely the case in the history of individuals. To gain a proper command over our lips, and self-control in other respects, we must review our triumphs and our defeats. When conscious that we have succeeded better than usual, we must not be vainglorious, but search out the occasion of our success, that in future conflicts we may act and triumph in a like manner. When, unhappily, we have been overcome, let us be humbled and instructed, but not disheartened and enfeebled. By our defeat we have suffered shame and loss; yet some advantage also may be gained,—both in

the way of instruction how to overcome in the future, and of motives to do our utmost. Let us press home such inquiries as these: How did it happen that I was overcome? Wherein did the special power of the temptation consist? In what respects was I unprepared for the result? What have I lost through my unfaithfulness? Then, trusting to Divine aid, let us gird ourselves afresh to contend against evil. Britain was startled when intelligence arrived that some of her brave-hearted sons, led on by an experienced and heroic leader, had been repulsed by the Chinese at the entrance of the Peiho river, and that more than one-third of our countrymen there had been slain or wounded. But Admiral Hope, though defeated, was not dismayed. A crafty foe had for once deceived him; but it was still needful that Britain's honour should be maintained. We were not satisfied until the treaty, according to previous engagement, had been ratified in the Chinese metropolis. Something was learned even by the defeat at the Taku forts. So, in the conflict with evil, we shall gloriously triumph, if we learn something from every past defeat. We shall be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."



## CHAPTER XII.

## INCENTIVES TO THE RIGHT USE OF OUR LIPS.

"A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth."  
(Prov. xii. 14.)

"Rouse to some work of high and holy love,  
And thou an angel's happiness shalt know,—  
Shalt bless the earth while in the world above;  
The good begun by thee shall onward flow  
In many a branching stream, and wider grow;  
The seed that, in these few and fleeting hours,  
Thy hands, unsparing and unwearied, sow,  
Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,  
And yield thee fruits Divine in heaven's immortal bowers."

—CARLOS WILCOX.

THE voyager who desires to reach some distant coast has need of motive-power. In our days of invention and mechanical skill, motion is gained, on land and sea, in various ways. He whose resources are abundant may make choice among these; but if he would proceed to some remote country, he must have motive-power of some sort. In the records concerning shipwrecks, and disasters at sea, we have sometimes met with a statement like this: "Our dismantled vessel drifted on the surging waters, hither and thither, helpless as a log." To those who have experienced the dangers and hardships of a seafaring life, such a

declaration must suggest recollections and feelings of pensive character. Sailors have reason to dread detention in mid-ocean. The dismantling of the gallant ship, perhaps, took place during a terrific storm. One mast after another went by the board; and some heavy sea, striking the rudder, so damaged it as to render it useless. No juremast, such as will give to the sailors any control over their vessel, can be raised. Cordage, and spars, and canvas have been lost. When the tempest has partially abated, the poor fellows find themselves, on that limitless and treacherous waste of waters, entirely at the mercy of winds and waves. Their escape from immediate death has been through the intervention of Providence. It appears to them almost miraculous. But, should even a brief storm now arise, they can scarcely hope to escape a watery grave; and how long they may have to remain in such peril they cannot say. On all sides, for hundreds of miles, the expanse of water surrounds them. They long to be at home, but they have not sufficient motive-power to impel them thitherward.—Or, perchance, that dismantling occurred amid the horrors of naval conflict. Whilst the crew were doing their utmost to injure and destroy the foe, a ship of greater size and heavier metal approached and poured in upon them a resistless broadside. Many a brave-hearted sailor was thereby laid lifeless; and others, dreadfully mangled, and writhing in agony, were taken below to receive such aid as the surgeons could give. The ship itself became unfit for further operations, and almost

unmanageable. Her formidable foe had, however, passed on to engage in other deeds of destruction. The contending war-ships move somewhat away from their former position, and the dismantled vessel drifts slowly in a contrary direction. When, at eventide, the foe has gained the mastery, and has placed prize-crews on board several of the vanquished ships, this floating hulk is, for the time, undiscerned. But most wretched is the condition of her crew. They know how near, and in what direction, friendly ports might be found; yet are they unable to proceed in that direction. They suppose that at daylight the telescopes of the victors will scour the horizon all around, and careful search will be made for the missing vessels. A foreign prison will, most likely, be their lot; yet they cannot flee. The wounded may long to look once more on their loved ones; and the unwounded may desire to reach some harbour where their suffering comrades might be cared for, and their ship repaired. But such wishes are vain. They, and their bark, are at the mercy of every current, and will, most likely, prove an easy prey to the enemy.—Then, again, a ship may be so long becalmed within the tropics, or elsewhere, that the crew will be greatly distressed. Vessels have been so detained, week after week, until the provisions and water were quite exhausted. Day after day the unhappy men could discern nothing but the cloudless sky and scorching sun above, and the unruffled expanse of water beneath. No breath of wind fanned their feverish brows. No indication of

approaching deliverance could be discerned. As the wretched crew contemplated the horrible fate which impended, they felt that they would rather brave the most awful tempest, than remain where they were. To die of hunger and thirst,—or, driven to madness by raging fever, to leap overboard and perish,—seemed more terrible than even to contend for-existence amid the wild uproar of a sea-storm. The fortitude of hardy seamen proved insufficient in that time of fatal calm. Reason itself gave way, while the ship continued to drift hither and thither as the currents moved, but made no progress toward the land to which those perishing ones desired to go. So long as life and thought remained, they ardently longed to reach that far-distant country. Many of them knew that parents, and wives, and children, would be waiting to welcome them. Some of them had wealth in that land. Others were bearing thither riches which they had acquired since they left it. All regarded that land as their home. They earnestly desire to be there. The earnest wish was theirs, but not the motive-power.

The soul needs a right motive-power. Most of us desire to reach the heavenly coast. We have heard of a better country, and have learned enough concerning its blessedness to make us wish one day to enter upon its enjoyment. In order to do so, we must approve ourselves to God. Obedience resulting from love we acknowledge to be the only pathway to everlasting glory. But we need a motive-power. In order that we may be led to the mercy-seat, and

may there obtain pardoning and renewing grace through faith in the precious blood of Christ; and that, when partaking of the great salvation, we may persevere in the way to eternal life, by the patient continuance in well-doing; we need suitable motive-power. This is obtained when the Holy Ghost applies to our hearts the true incentives to right action. One of the most lamentable spectacles on earth is that of an unhappy soul fully conscious of the importance of heavenly things, yet making no effort to secure them. Such an individual is driven hither and thither, as avarice or prodigality, pride or passion, anger or sloth, or any other evil may incline him; yet bearing about with him the conviction that for worthless trifles he is forfeiting the blessedness of heaven. One of the most pleasing sights in this world is that of a Christian believer, filled with "power from on high," making his way, through adverse currents of various kinds, to the haven of endless calm and bliss. The conduct of that voyager to the heavenly land is influenced by the motives furnished in holy Scripture, and applied to his heart by the Divine Spirit. We need duly to consider these incentives to holy living, in reference to every branch of Christian conduct. For the present we consider such as apply to the right government of our tongues.

1. *The gift of speech manifests the goodness of God.*—In order that we may be enabled to hold communion with our friends, it is needful that the marvellous instrument, which has been formed by Divine power,

should be preserved and guarded by our gracious Creator. The energy of Him by whom all things are sustained is ever needful, that our tongues may perform their office; and the protection of the ever-present Jehovah, in order to keep that instrument unimpaired. Perhaps we can the more readily discern our own obligation to our great Benefactor, by considering the pitiable condition of those who have been deprived of the blessings which we regard as matters of course, or who never possessed them. It has pleased our gracious God so to order the affairs of the human family, that it is a very rare instance in which any one of our race is at once a deaf-mute and blind. Such cases as that of Laura Bridgman have attracted public attention, not merely because of their intrinsic interest, but also because of their rarity. Christian philanthropists could not but be thankful to learn how a child who from earliest infancy was devoid of sight, hearing, speech, and even smell, could yet be taught the great truths of our holy religion, and led by the gracious Spirit to manifest a true love to God and her fellow-creatures. But we are thankful that such instances of sad privation are rare. We know, however, that the absence or loss of some one of the senses is not uncommon. In the case of Dr. Kitto, there was the loss of hearing when he was a lad; and the partial loss of speech, resulting from a terrific fall of thirty-five feet. In this instance the mind had been stored with many lessons before the earlier privation occurred, and yet more fully before the latter took

place. But, though there was a wide difference between the position of John Kitto and that of Laura Bridgman, we are painfully affected as we read such statements as the following from the pen which wrote "Daily Bible Illustrations:"—"I never heard the voices of any of my children. The reader, of course, knows this ; but the fact, as stated in plain words, is almost shocking. Is there anything on earth so engaging to a parent, as to catch the first lispsings of his infant's tongue? or so interesting, as to listen to its dear prattle, and trace its gradual mastery of speech? If there be any one thing arising out of my condition, which more than another fills my heart with grief, it is this: it is to *see* their blessed lips in motion, and to *hear* them not; and to witness others moved to smiles and kisses by the sweet peculiarities of infantile speech, which are incommunicable to me, and which pass by me like the idle wind."—The deaf-mute, favoured with the possession of sight, is not unfrequently met with. The value of speech was impressed upon my mind, when, some years ago, I endeavoured to hold intercourse by finger-talk with one who had never heard the sound of the human voice, and had not enjoyed the advantages of a suitable school. She had been living among pious friends, though in a remote country-place. Some notions of religion had been conveyed to her mind. She would point to the palms of her hands, and, with great solemnity, extend her arms, to indicate the sufferings of the Lord Jesus; and she would point heavenward, to express the hope she cherished. But,

beyond a few leading thoughts, her mind was evidently unacquainted with the teachings of Divine revelation.—Another individual, equally deprived of hearing and speech, but somewhat more favourably circumstanced, was accustomed to meet with believers in Christ for Christian fellowship. He used to bring with him a pencil and a little paper; and, having united with the rest in devotional exercises, which must to him have been solitary, he would, in due course, present on the paper a brief statement of his experience, his hopes and fears, triumphs and conflicts; and then wait for such advice as could be conveyed by means of the pencil and paper. When he met pious friends in the open air, he would often endeavour to hold intercourse with them concerning the way to their Father's house. If even his friend was unacquainted with the method of talking by means of the fingers, the deaf-mute would manage, by a glance of the eye, an expression of countenance, motion of the hand, and other ways, to convey some notion of his state of feeling.—But such intercourse must be exceedingly incomplete. We have great reason for thankfulness to almighty God, if we are able to converse with our families and friends. We ought to acknowledge the goodness of our Divine Benefactor, if, around our hearth, and in the sanctuary of God, and where friends gather for social enjoyment, and in the market-place, and wherever pleasure or advantage is to be gained, we are permitted to speak and hear. A gift so valuable, and bestowed by a Divine Hand, ought to be rightly applied.



2. *We are responsible for the employment of our lips.*—Much has been said and written concerning the freedom of speech. Many have expressed their determination to do, and dare, and suffer, rather than allow such liberty to be suppressed. Doubtless, the legitimate freedom of speech is a right which ought to be jealously guarded, as of incalculable value. No true freedom, civil or religious, could be enjoyed, if this were denied. The possession of this right is needful to the permanent advancement of any community. But such liberty of speech does not imply that we are not responsible for the manner in which we employ our tongues. We are responsible, both to our Maker, and to our fellows. Who can deny that even human governments have a right to exercise some control over the tongues of those subject to their authority? Nay, human governments are under solemn obligations to do so. Earthly rulers do well to bear in mind that they are not infallible; that there is much in human conduct with which they ought not to meddle; that they must not intrude within the sacred domains of conscience; and that the free expression of opinion is, on the whole, so beneficial, that some amount of injury must be endured rather than undue checks should be placed upon such utterance of thought. Hence, a British magistrate, though, from large reading, observation, and reflection, fully satisfied that Romanism is not only injurious and perilous to the soul, but essentially opposed to our nation's welfare, may not punish a priest for the public advocacy of Papal dogmas. To this

the enlightened mind of Protestant Britain assents. That mind also demands, though vainly, that the doctrines of Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer, should be as freely proclaimed, by men holding in their hands an open Bible, throughout Spain, Austria, and other Romanized countries. Yet, we still maintain, even human governments ought to exercise some control over the speech of those under their authority. He who should publicly advocate the commission of theft, and murder, and treason, and adultery, and other crimes, ought to be punished. The talker is culpable, in such cases, as well as the doer, and he may be the more guilty of the two. Good men, deeply solicitous for the spread of true liberty, would nevertheless assent to magisterial interference.

More than this, we are well assured that almighty God most righteously claims to exercise unlimited authority over our lips. He is our Creator; His judgment is infallible; there is nothing unknown to Him; and there is no part of human conduct on which He cannot justly decide. "The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" We have, in the case of Shelomith's son, an admonitory instance of a wicked man held responsible for the improper employment of his lips. Shelomith was the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. Though of the seed of Abraham, she had married an Egyptian. It is probable that she secretly cherished the hope that she would thus escape the

hard lot which had befallen her kindred. At any rate, her children would be allowed to take place among the dominant Egyptians, and share their prosperity. Perhaps she might flatter herself that she would carefully instruct her little ones in the knowledge and fear of the God of Abraham and of Joseph. These favoured children would, therefore, enjoy the advantages of the Egyptians, and also of the Israelites. Most likely she never troubled her mind to explain how her children were to despise the gods of Pharaoh and worship the unseen Jehovah, and yet maintain the friendship of idolaters. Shelomith was endeavouring to serve God and mammon, and hoping to succeed. While Moses, who had been accustomed to the luxuries of a palace, was renouncing them that he might secure the favour of the Lord Jehovah, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," this unfaithful woman was endeavouring to carry out her worldly policy. But a sad lot awaited her. Shelomith's name is handed down as representing the half-hearted, who, yielding to motives of unhallowed sort, marry some wicked person, or in some other way sacrifice a good conscience, satisfied that they will at any rate ensure temporal prosperity. Neither the name of her husband, nor that of her bad and unhappy son, is given. Shelomith's name is to be the prominent one in the narrative. She had the misery, if spared so long, to witness her son growing up without any reverence for the God of Abraham. Circumstanced

as he had been, he would be utterly unable to rest in the old faith of Egypt, with its reptile gods. On the other hand, his carnal mind made him ready to shake off the restraints imposed by the law of Jehovah. Eventually, in furious strife, his real character was disclosed. He openly blasphemed the name of Him who had brought them forth from the land of Egypt. In reality he had long been an enemy to God; but that hostility was now publicly and loudly proclaimed. Here was a crime more audacious, we are inclined to think, than the encampment had hitherto witnessed. Even when the golden calf was made, some semblance of respect to their Divine Deliverer was both retained and expressed: "Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord." The idol was professedly employed as a symbol of the unseen Jehovah, who had brought them out from the house of bondage. "They said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." But the wicked son of Shelomith dared to throw off even the appearance of reverence, and to place himself in a position of avowed hostility to the God of Israel. The people were greatly shocked at the language he employed, and placed the offender in custody, until they should learn what was the will of Jehovah concerning him. In the doom pronounced on that wicked and unhappy man, we solemnly learn that we are held responsible for the use of our lips. We must not say, "Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" The soul of Shelomith must have been

filled with anguish, if she survived to know of the tragic end of her son. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin."

On the other hand, we are taught that the Lord has ever been mindful of those who have employed their lips according to His blessed will. An encouraging instance occurs in the case of Caleb and his companion Joshua. When the ten spies united in an evil report concerning the land of promise, and the whole congregation, predisposed by their unbelieving and rebellious hearts, murmured against the Lord, the voices of these two faithful servants of God were raised on His behalf. Their testimony would appear to be lost. They could scarcely make themselves heard amid the tumultuous complainings of the multitude. The two would be compelled, at length, to retire to their tents, greatly discouraged. Their testimony would seem to have been altogether disregarded. But those right words were noted by Him for whose cause they were uttered. Half a century afterwards, these brave-hearted men conversed with each other concerning this trial of their fidelity. Joshua was then the victorious leader of Israel, and had the pleasure of bestowing on his comrade and friend the inheritance which had been promised him so long ago, because he "followed" the Lord "fully." A little longer, and the two witnesses

for their God walked together in the heavenly Canaan. —Whatever the gifts entrusted to us, we are required and encouraged to act “as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

3. *All our words are known to almighty God.*—“O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.”—Hagar, when with Ishmael in the wilderness of Beersheba, appeared to be friendless. At length she could bear no longer to look upon the distress of her child. She could do nothing toward the relief of his thirst; for the water in the bottle was spent, and she could find no further supply. The distressed mother, therefore, carefully placed her lad beneath the shade of such foliage as the wilderness provided; and then retired to a certain distance, that she might not be tortured by hearing his moans, yet might still be near if help should arrive in any unexpected way. She said, “Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept.” Poor woman! she seemed to be alone. In days gone by she had received many tokens of kindness from Abraham; and had he been near, surely he would not have allowed her child and herself thus miserably to perish. Even Sarah, whatever her harshness, and whatever cause of offence Ishmael had given, would scarcely have

refused a little water to the perishing fugitives. But the tent of Abraham, once Hagar's home, was now far distant. No habitation of man was near. The despairing mother might think that no ear heard the faint moans of her dying boy, or the cry of her agonized soul. But, in that hour of sharp distress, the suffering ones were not forgotten by the Universal Lord. "And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is."—Withersoever, in the changing circumstances of life, we are driven, the Lord will still be attentive to the cry for help and comfort which we may direct unto Him.

Jonah, when unfaithful to God, was led into great trouble. Like many who, afraid of their fellows, dare the displeasure of their God, he found that his perils had been multiplied in consequence of his cowardice and sin. When, however, he began in earnest to cry unto God for mercy, his prayer was not turned aside. At that time Jonah was most effectually excluded from the external means of grace. He certainly had no opportunity for ascending the hill of Zion, or presenting any sin-offering at Jerusalem, or listening to the promises of Jehovah as read by the Levites. The fugitive prophet was in the depths of the sea. A great fish, prepared by the Lord, had become his prison. Yet from that strange dungeon the cry of a troubled heart reached the ears of the Lord. "Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God

out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and He heard me. . . . I said, I am cast out of Thy sight; yet will I look again toward Thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and *my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple.*" The voice of a contrite one was heard even from thence, and regarded by God.—In like manner, all our utterances are known to the Omniscient One, and recorded in the book of His remembrance. "There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether."

4. *The Lord Jesus died that our voice might be for ever employed in the happy service of God.*—In pensive reverie I beheld a group of persons seated upon the ground. They were of melancholy aspect, and in their demeanour was depicted the triumph of misery over mirth. By the side of each one lay a harp which appeared to have been of costly and excellent kind, but now unattuned, and injured, and defiled. Spectators might be reminded of Judah's captives, yet there was no complete resemblance. In those I gazed on, there was no reverence for the Lord's song: they would have willingly sung that in an alien land, if they could have gained any advantage. Most readily would these have associated



with Babylon's triumphant sons and daughters. Sinfulness was even more apparent than wretchedness. It was told me, that once two, of similar nature, and entrusted with such instruments, were for a time accustomed to make music which angels loved to hear, and which was pleasing even to the Lord of angels. But I heard no such strains. Ever and anon the harp was raised by one and another, and, broken as it was, notes expressive of rage and selfishness, of pride and impurity, of defiance and blasphemy, were called forth. It was reported, that, in that golden age when from harps like these melody was heard resembling the songs of seraphim, there was no sorrow in that land, no storm darkened its heavens, no pain distressed its inhabitants, no thorns encumbered its soil, and no death was known there. But, when I gazed thereon, sorrow prevailed everywhere, and tempests often raged; because of pain you might hear loud shrieks and suppressed moans every day; a curse rested on the ground; and the king of terrors multiplied his trophies. I observed that a strange power was in the music which was produced from the damaged instruments. The hearts of men felt that power. But, for the most part, it was exerted to promote the evil and the false. The scene became darker, and seemed as though it would speedily be covered with blackness and despair. But, as I looked, there approached One of more than earthly beauty and dignity. He drew near to the unholy and unhappy group, and regarded them with an aspect of unfathomable

tenderness. He did not turn away, though a scowl of disdain and hatred was apparent on the features of some of the wretched beings. He drew close to one of the most vile and miserable, and spoke to him in words of solemnity and love. There was evidently a mighty struggle going on within the heart of the one thus addressed. At length he yielded to the urgent entreaties of the Divine Visitant, and asked for salvation. Then did the great Deliverer bestow upon him many gifts, of inestimable worth, more than human language can declare. Having done so, the Heavenly One took from the dust the golden harp, and replaced every chord, and attuned it afresh, and placed it in the hand of the happy one. Heart-cheering were the strains at once poured forth. A few of the words I distinguished, such as these: "O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." Then I observed that the Divine Deliverer proceeded to address others among the unhappy group. Some received Him not, and therefore remained in their misery and sinfulness. But to as many as did receive Him He gave blessedness. So it speedily came to pass, that there were many uniting to express their holy joy in sacred song. I could not but inquire who this gracious Benefactor was, and how He came to possess such power to bless. I learned that, though He had for ever possessed infinite excellence, yet, to redeem these guilty ones, He had become a perfect Saviour through sufferings. He had shed His precious

blood, in order that these might be delivered from the cruel thralldom of the soul, and might serve the Heavenly King for ever. As I continued to look, the number of those whose hearts were free, and whose countenances were happy, and whose voices were melodious, was constantly increasing. At length a trumpet-blast, loud as ten thousand thunders, was heard. I beheld, and, lo, a mighty transformation had taken place. New heavens and a new earth appeared. There was no more curse. Angel-voices were heard in the celestial city. But there were also present, of those whose harps had once been broken, and dishonoured, and employed in the service of the foe, a multitude which no man could number. These ascribed unceasing praise unto God and the Lamb, and said, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Then, as I heard the voice of these harpers harping with their harps, I felt that our lips, and all our powers, ought to be employed for Him who bought us with such a price.

5. *Almighty God waits to impart all needful aid.*—When Moses was directed by the Lord to go to the children of Israel, and prepare them for their speedy deliverance, there appeared, in his estimation, to be an invincible obstacle in his own want of eloquence. Such diffidence was, however, the result of regarding the subject in an improper manner. He who was commissioned, by the Lord Jehovah, for a specified

task, might have confidently expected that sufficient power would be afforded. The question did not turn upon the natural fitness or unfitness of Moses. The Lord had graciously selected him as the instrument to be employed. The question, therefore, really was, Could the omnipotent Creator adequately prepare and successfully employ the agency He had chosen? Unbelief and pride had more to do with the hesitancy of Moses, than humility had. Most likely, Moses might not astonish his countrymen with any marvellous eloquence. Perhaps some of them might be ready to doubt whether one so slow of speech could really be the man Divinely appointed as their deliverer and leader. Certainly, all that Moses could say would, in itself, prove utterly insufficient to overcome the prejudices and fears of the Hebrews, or the self-will and pride of Pharaoh. But, as he had received an explicit command from the Almighty, it was undoubtedly his duty to attend thereto, and confidently leave results. A Divine power would attend his words. "Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."—It must be acknowledged that there is a yet greater difficulty in the proper government of our tongues.

It is not a mere question of fluency. Had this been all, the remedy would have been comparatively easy. By employing the mouth of an ass to reprove the sinful folly of a prophet, the Almighty has made it apparent, that He needs not our eloquence; and, when He chooses to employ right words, He can qualify any instrument to utter them. In truth, if He had not supplied us with this capability, we could no more have spoken than the ass; and it is easy to Him to confer eloquence wherever He sees fit. But, in the government of our lips, there is need that the heart's irregular desires and passions should be controlled, and that holy emotion and purpose should be constantly supplied. That heart is, by nature, "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." If we were left to ourselves, it would deceive and ruin us. We greatly need Divine aid, and that aid has been graciously promised. David had reason to complain that his enemies sought his overthrow by means of a perversion of his words, as well as in other ways. This was the case when he was at the court of Saul,—when among his own band of outlaws,—and when among the jealous chieftains of the King of Gath. "Every day," said he, "they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil." But, even in these unfavourable circumstances, he obtained grace from God to behave himself wisely. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. In God I will praise His word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." So may we obtain grace

which shall enable us to speak and act wisely. We are encouraged to make the effort, because God will supply all needful aid.

6. *There is great delight in thus doing good.*—Although the entrance of sin into our world has sadly disordered its affairs, yet the gracious Creator has so interposed that we still find pleasure in the performance of many acts which are needful for our welfare. For instance, it is necessary that growing lads should constantly and vigorously move their limbs, in order that they may become strong and pliant. Yon village-school must supply successors to the rival blacksmiths who at the two ends of the village are now wielding the ponderous hammer, and others to plough the adjacent fields, and reap down the corn in years to come; and, perhaps, some to keep watch on a ship-deck during dark and stormy nights; and others, unhappily, to maintain our country's rights on some dreadful battle-plain. Whatever the future lot and duties of the lads may prove, it is well known that plenty of muscle and strength will be needed in the aggregate; and, that these may be duly forthcoming, it is necessary that the lads should be constantly in motion. How can they be induced so to exert themselves? If each has to be watched during the whole time, and urged to move more quickly, there will be work for many seniors. Few old men would be disposed to travel so far, or to run so fast, or to go through so many evolutions as it is desirable these youngsters should accomplish. What parish-meeting can settle the difficult problem? The grave

men need not give themselves any trouble concerning the matter. All has been wisely arranged. All you have to do is to open that door. Let them out. That is sufficient. If there is room enough, they will exercise themselves. It has been so ordered, that, because of its important and beneficial results, they shall find pleasure therein.—Now, it is needful, in order that our world should be truly prosperous, that we should endeavour to do each other good. The all-gracious Governor has so ordered the constitution of our nature, that, as our souls become healthy, we find pleasure in doing good. Perhaps none who ever strive to benefit their fellows altogether fail of this delight. The more it is experienced, the more it will be desired. The right employment of our lips may thus furnish us with sweet refreshment, when other streams, in which we have trusted, are dry.

7. *Whatever painfulness may be in our task will soon be over.*—We readily perceive that “the burden of the Lord,” as it rested on the minds of His ancient servants the prophets, and was uttered by their lips, was often the occasion of great disquietude. We can trace this in the biography of David, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and others. But these men of God have now stood in the presence of their Master for ages, and never experienced one moment of sadness. We find evidences of much grief in the writings and sayings of the early preachers of the Gospel. It was their high privilege to utter words of salvation, and to speak of “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” But, because they met with much opposition and

persecution, and because their words were proving "the savour of death unto death" to many hearers, the ambassadors of Christ spoke often with tears, and heaviness of heart. But Paul and Apollos, Peter and John, James and Stephen, have been long engaged in service unutterably happy, as well as unspeakably dignified. In all ages, those who with their lips, as well as with their lives, have endeavoured to maintain the right and the true, and to promote the welfare of their race and the glory of God, have suffered much. But such men as Wickliffe and Cranmer, Luther and Zwingli, Wesley and Whitefield, suffer no more. They are for ever with the Lord. Not only is it certain that our task on earth will soon be accomplished; but our sojourn here may be terminated at any moment, and without any warning. We dare not even surmise when or where our latest words will be spoken. Those who have spoken most wisely, and whose words have done much to promote the temporal or spiritual welfare of their fellows, have often been removed most unexpectedly. Voices have been suddenly silenced which many loved to hear. Words of wisdom uttered by the illustrious prince, on whose arm our beloved Queen long leaned, will be remembered for years to come; but, when in the midst of his years, he was snatched away. Bishop Heber, when about the same age, and engaged in the multifarious and important duties of his episcopate in India, was even more suddenly summoned into the unseen world. One day addressing the assembled



clergy and people, and the next among the sainted in heaven. On a Monday morning, in 1854, Mr. Justice Talfourd was addressing the Grand Jury at Stafford, and uttering wise and kindly words concerning the bonds which should unite the various classes of the British community. The worthy Judge little thought that the latest sands of life were then falling, and that the words which he was then pronouncing would, in a short time, be read throughout the kingdom as his latest utterance. But so it was. In the midst of that address he faltered, and ceased. He was hastily removed to an adjacent room, but medical men at once perceived that life was extinct. When, still more recently, Lord Campbell reserved his decision on an important case from Saturday until Monday, he could not foresee that he would never have the opportunity of pronouncing it. On the Sabbath morn his Lordship was found seated in his arm-chair, but lifeless.—We ought to employ none but right words ; for we know not how speedily our latest may be uttered.

8. *The voice which is employed aright on earth will be heard in heaven.*—The words we now employ furnish some evidence of the state of our heart. They will therefore be reviewed in the day of judgment, as making apparent the rectitude of the decisions then pronounced. “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Of course, the utterances of our lips will be compared with our real intentions ; so that they shall then appear in their true character. Many, alas, will be

condemned by their words. The ancients had a fable that certain goddesses resided on the shores of Sicily whose voices were exceedingly melodious, but their hearts deplorably cruel. It was said that they would sing so sweetly, that mariners returning homeward in their vessels would forget their wives and children, and, listening to the strange music, would linger near those coasts until they miserably perished.—There have been Sirens in fact, as well as in fable. Too many have so employed their voices that those who were voyaging, or disposed to voyage, toward the haven of everlasting repose and bliss, have listened, lingered, and perished. Dreadful will be the account rendered by such tempters. By their words they will be “condemned.” But it is blessedly possible so to obtain grace from on high, that our voices shall be employed for God first on earth, and then in heaven. The language we utter will furnish evidence that the heart from which it proceeded had been renewed. So by our words shall we be “justified.” Let us regard ourselves as entrusted with a harp which is one day to make sweet music within the palace of the King of kings. We are now to guard it from injury; and to learn how to play skillfully thereupon; and to employ it, as opportunity serves, in celebrating the goodness and greatness of our Sovereign. Soon we are to be admitted to His presence.

When Ireland was, in ancient days, governed by her native kings, music was often heard at the hill of Tara. There he resided who claimed to be

lord of them all, and demanded fealty from the other kings. Let us suppose that some minstrel had received a summons to appear, on an appointed day, at the royal castle, to assist at some high festivity. The minstrel would only expect to remain a little time at the palace, and could not anticipate as largess more than a handful of gold. Yet, as he journeyed from the Giant's Causeway, or the Hill of Howth, or elsewhere, what care he would take of the harp which was soon to be heard by the mighty king of Meath, at the hill of Tara!—We are journeying toward the hill of Zion. We hope to make melody well pleasing to the Lord Jehovah, Maker of heaven and earth. Once within the palace, we shall go out no more. As largess we are to inherit a kingdom, and to receive "fulness of joy," and "pleasures for evermore." Meanwhile, let us care for the harp, and learn to play skilfully thereon.

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